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LETTER

OF

G E R R I T S M I T H

TO

4265, 283

REV. JAMES SMYLIE,

OF THE

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

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## LETTER, ETC.

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PETERBORO', October 28, 1836.

RIV. JAMES SMYLLIE,

*Late Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Mississippi :*

SIR,—Accept my thanks for your politeness in sending me a copy of your book on slavery. This book proves, that the often repeated assertion, that the whole South is opposed to the discussion of the question of slavery, is not true :—and so far, I rejoice in its appearance. I presume—I know, indeed, that you are not the only man in the South, who is in favor of this discussion. There are, doubtless, many persons in the South, who believe, that all attempts to suppress it, are vain, as well as wicked. Besides, you virtually admit, that the South is compelled to discuss the question of slavery ; or, at least, to give her own views of it, in order to prevent the conscience of Southern Christians—that conscience, “ which does make cowards of us all ”—from turning traitor to the cause of slavery. I rejoice, too, that you accompanied the copy sent to me, with the request, that I should review it, and make “ candid remarks ” upon it ; and, that you have thus put it in my power to send to the South some of my views on slavery, without laying myself open to the charge of being discourteous and obtrusive.

You undertake to show that slavery existed, and, with the Divine approbation, amongst the Old Testament Jews ; and that it also existed, whilst our Saviour and his Apostles were on the earth, and was approved by them. You thence argue, that it is not only an innocent institution, but one which it is a religious duty to maintain.

I admit, for the sake of argument, that there was a servitude in the patriarchal families which was approved by God. But what does this avail in your defence of slavery, unless you show, that that servitude and slavery are essentially alike ? The literal terms of the relation of master and servant, under that servitude, are not made known to us ; but we can, nevertheless, confidently infer their spirit from facts,

which illustrate their practical character; and, if this character be found to be opposite to that of slavery, then it is manifest, that what you say of patriarchal servitude is impertinent, and tends to mislead, rather than enlighten your readers. To a few of these facts and a few of the considerations arising from them, I now call your attention.

1st. Read the first eight verses of the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, and tell me, if you ever saw Gov. M'Duffie or any other Southern patriarch (for the governor desires to have all slaveholders looked upon in the character of patriarchs) putting himself on a level with his servants, and "working with his hands," after the manner of Abraham and Sarah?

2d. There was such a community of interest—so much of mutual confidence—between Abraham and his servants, that they fought his battles. Indeed, the terms of this patriarchal servitude were such, that in the event of the master's dying without issue, one of his servants inherited his property (Gen. 15: 3). But, according to the code of Southern slavery, the slave can no more own property, than he can own himself. "All that a slave possesses belongs to his master"—"Slaves are incapable of inheriting or transmitting property." These, and many similar phrases, are found in that code. Severe as was the system of Roman slavery, yet in this respect, it was far milder than yours; for its subjects could acquire property (their *peculium*); and frequently did they purchase their liberty with it. So far from Southern slaves being, as Abraham's servants were, a dependence in war, it is historically true, that they are accustomed to improve this occasion to effect their escape, and strengthen the hands of the enemy. As a further proof that Southern slavery begets none of that confidence between master and slave, which characterized the mutual intercourse of Abraham and his servants—the slave is prohibited, under severe penalties, from having any weapons in his possession, even in time of peace; and the nightly patrol, which the terror-stricken whites of Southern towns keep up, in peace, as well as in war, argues any thing, rather than the existence of such confidence. "For keeping or carrying a gun, or powder or shot, or a club, or other weapon whatsoever, offensive or defensive, a slave incurs, says a Southern statute book, for each offence, thirty-nine lashes."

3d. When I read your quotation from the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, made for the purpose of showing that God allowed Abraham to have slaves, I could not but wonder at your imprudence, in meddling with this chapter, which is of itself, enough to convince any unbiassed mind, that Abraham's servants held a relation to their



master and to society, totally different from that held by Southern slaves. Have you ever known a great man in your state send his slave into another to choose a wife for his son?—And if so, did the lily white damsel he selected call the sable servant “my lord?”—And did her family spare no pains to manifest respect for their distinguished guest, and promote his comfort? But this chapter, which you call to your aid, informs us, that Abraham’s servant was honored with such tokens of confidence and esteem. If a Southern slave shall ever be employed in such a mission, he may count himself highly favored, if he be not taken up by the way, imprisoned, and “sold for his jail fees.”

4th. Did you ever know Southern slaves contend for their rights with their masters? When a Southern master reads the thirteenth verse of the thirty-first chapter of Job, he must think that Job was in the habit of letting down his dignity very low.

5th. Do Southern masters accord religious privileges and impart religious instruction equally to their slaves and their children? Your laws, which visit with stripes, imprisonment, and death, the attempt to teach slaves to read the Bible, show but too certainly, that the Southern master, who should undertake to place “his children and his household” on the same level, in respect to their religious advantages, as it is probable that Abraham did (Gen. 18 : 19), would soon find himself in the midst of enemies, not to his reputation only, but to his life also.

And now, sir, admitting that the phrase, on which you lay so much stress—“bought with his money”—was used in connexion with a form of servitude which God approved—I put it to your candor, whether this phrase should be allowed to weigh at all against the facts I have adduced and the reasonings I have employed to show the true nature of that servitude, and how totally unlike it is to slavery? Are you not bound by the principles of sound reasoning, to attach to it a meaning far short of what, I grant, is its natural import in this age, and, especially, amongst a people who, like ourselves, are accustomed to associate such an expression with slavery? Can you deny, that you are bound to adopt such a meaning of it, as shall harmonize with the facts, which illustrate the nature of the servitude in question, and with the laws and character of Him, whose sanction you claim for that servitude? An opposite course would give a preference to words over things, which common sense could not tolerate. Many instances might be cited to show the absurdity of the assumption that whatever is spoken of in the Scriptures as being “bought,” is property. Boaz

“purchased” his wife. Hosea “bought her (his wife) for fifty pieces of silver.” Jacob, to use a common expression, “took his wages” in wives. Joseph “bought” the Egyptians, after they had said to him “buy us.” But, so far from their having become the property of Joseph or of his king, it was a part of the bargain, that they were to have as much land as they wanted—seed to sow it—and four-fifths of the crops. The possessors of such independence and such means of wealth are not the property of their fellow-men.

I need say no more, to prove that slavery is entirely unlike the servitude in the patriarchal families. I pass on, now, to the period between the promulgation of the Divine law by Moses, and the birth of Christ.

You argue from the fifth and sixth verses of the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, that God authorized the enslavement of the Jews: but, on the same page, on which you do so, you also show the contrary. It may, nevertheless, be well for me to request you to read and read again Leviticus 25: 39—42, until your remaining doubts, on this point, shall all be put to flight. I am free to admit the probability, that under some of the forms of servitude, in which Jews were held, the servant was subjected to a control so extensive as to expose him to suffer great cruelties. These forms corresponded with the spirit and usages of the age, in which they existed; entirely unsuited, as they are, to a period and portion of the world, blessed with the refining and softening influences of civilization and the gospel. Numerous as were the statutory regulations for the treatment of the servant, they could not preclude the large discretion of the master. The apprentice, in our country, is subjected to an authority, equalling a parent’s authority, but not always tempered in its exercise, with a parent’s love. His condition is, therefore, not unfrequently marked with severity and suffering. Now, imagine what this condition would be, under the harsh features of a more barbarous age, and you will have in it, as I conjecture, no distant resemblance to that of some of the Jewish servants. But how different is this condition from that of the slave!

I am reminded in this connexion, of the polished, but pernicious, article on slavery in a late number of the Biblical Repertory. In that article Professor Hodge says, that the claim of the slaveholder “is found to be nothing more than a transferable claim of service either for life, or for a term of years.” Will he allow me to ask him, where he discovered that the pretensions of the slaveholder are all resolvable into this modest claim? He certainly did not discover it

in any slave code ; nor in any practical slavery. Where then ? No where, but in that undisclosed system of servitude, which is the creation of his own fancy. To this system I raise no objection whatever. On the contrary, I am willing to admit its beauty and its worthiness of the mint in which it was coined. But I protest against his right to bestow upon it the name of another and totally different thing. He must not call it slavery.

Suppose a poor German to be so desirous of emigrating with his family to America, as to agree to give his services for ten years, as a compensation for the passage. Suppose further, that the services are to be rendered to the captain of the ship in which they sail, or to any other person, to whom he may assign his claim. Such a bargain is not uncommon. Now, according to Professor Hodge, this German may as rightly as any of your Southern servants, be called a slave. He may as rightly be called *property*, as they may be, who, in the language of the South Carolina laws, "shall be deemed, held, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law, to be chattels personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, *to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.*"

We will glance at a few points of difference in their condition. 1st. The German is capable of making a contract, and in the case supposed, does make a contract ; but your slave is incapable of making any contract. 2d. The German receives wages ; the price of carrying himself and family being the stipulated price for his services, during the ten years ; but your slave receives no wages. 3d. The German, like any other hireling, and, like any apprentice in our country, is under the protection of law. But, there is no law to shield the slave from wrongs. Being a mere chattel or thing, he has no rights ; and, therefore, he can have no wrongs to be redressed. Does Professor Hodge say, that there are statutes limiting and regulating the power of the slaveholder ? I grant there are ; though it must be remembered, that there is one way of even murdering a slave, which some of the slave States do not only not forbid, but impliedly and practically admit.\* The Professor should know, however, that all

\* The licensed murder referred to, is that where the slave dies under "moderate correction." But is not the murder of a slave by a white man, *in any way*, practically licensed in all the slave States ? Who ever heard of a white man's being put to death, under Southern laws, for the murder of a slave ? American slavery provides impunity for the white murderer of the slave, by its allowing none but whites—none but those who construct and uphold the system of abominations—to testify against the murderer. But why particularize causes of this impunity ? The whole

these statutes are, practically, a mere nullity. Nevertheless, they show the absoluteness of the power which they nominally qualify. This absoluteness is as distinctly implied by them, as the like was by the law of the Emperor Claudius, which imposed limitations upon the "jus vitæ et necis" (the right of life and death) which Roman slavery put into the hand of the master. But if the Professor should be so imprudent as to cite us to the slave code for evidence of its merciful provisions, he will, in so doing, authorize us to cite him to that code for evidence of the *nature* of slavery. This authority, however, he would not like to give us; for he is unwilling to have slavery judged of by its own code. He insists, that it shall be judged of by that ideal system of slavery, which is lodged in his own brain, and which he can bring forth by parcels, to suit present occasions, as Mahomet produced the leaves of the Koran.

Professor Hodge tells his readers, in substance, that the selling of men, as they are sold under the system of slavery, is to be classed with the cessions of territory, occasionally made by one sovereign to another; and he would have the slave, who is sold from hand to hand, and from State to State, at the expense to his bleeding heart, of the disruption of its dearest ties, think his lot no harder than that of the inhabitant of Louisiana, who was passed without his will, from the jurisdiction of the French government to that of the United States.

When a good man lends himself to the advocacy of slavery, he must, at least for a time, feel himself to be any where but at home, amongst his new thoughts, doctrines, and modes of reasoning. This is very evident in the case before us—especially, when now and then, old habits of thought and feeling break out, in spite of every effort to repress them, and the Professor is himself again, and discourses as manfully, as fearlessly, and as eloquently, as he ever had done before

policy of the Southern slave system goes to provide it. How unreasonable is it to suppose, that they, who have conspired against a portion of their fellow-beings, and mutually pledged themselves to treat them as *mere things*—how unreasonable, I say, is it to suppose, that they would consent to put a *man* to death, on account of his treatment, in whatever way, of a *mere thing*? Not long ago, I was informed by a highly respectable lawyer of the State of Georgia, that he had known a number of attempts (attempts most probably but in form and name) to effect the conviction of whites for their undoubted murder of slaves. But in every instance, the jurors perjured themselves, rather than consent that a *man* should be put to death, for the liberty he had taken in disposing of a *thing*. They had rather perjure themselves, than by avenging the blood of a *slave* with that of a *man*, make a breach upon the policy of keeping the slave ignorant, that he has the *nature*, and consequently the *rights*, of a *man*.

the slaveholders got their hands upon him. It is not a little amusing to notice, that, although the burden of his article is to show that slavery is one of God's institutions, (what an undertaking for a Professor of Theology in the year 1836!) he so far forgets the interests of his new friends and their expectations from him, as to admit on one page, that "the general principles of the gospel have destroyed domestic slavery throughout the greater part of Christendom;" and on another, that "the South has to choose between emancipation, by the silent and holy influence of the gospel, or to abide the issue of a long continued conflict against the laws of God." Whoever heard, until these strange times on which we have fallen, of any thing, which, to use the Professor's language about slavery, "it is in vain, to contend is sin, and yet profess reverence for the Scriptures," being at war with and destroyed by the principles of the gospel. What sad confusion of thought the pro-slavery influences, to which some great divines have yielded, have wrought in them!

I will proceed to argue, that the institution in the Southern States called "slavery," is radically unlike any form of servitude under which Jews were held, agreeably to the Divine will; and also radically unlike any form of servitude approved of God in the patriarchal families.

1st. God does not contradict Himself. He is "without variable-ness or shadow of turning." He loves his word and has "magnified it above all his name." He commands his rational creatures to "search the Scriptures." He cannot, therefore, approve of a system which forbids the searching of them, and shuts out their light from the soul; and which, by the confession of your own selves, turns men in this gospel land into heathen. He has written his commandment against adultery, and He cannot, therefore, approve of a system, which induces this crime, by forbidding marriage. The following extract from an opinion of the Attorney General of Maryland, shows some of the consequences of this "forbidding to marry." "A slave has never maintained an action against the violator of his bed. A slave is not admonished for incontinence, or punished for fornication or adultery; never prosecuted for bigamy." Again, God has written his commandment, that children should honor their parents. How, then, can He approve of a system, which pours contempt on the relation of parent and child? Which subjects them to be forcibly separated from each other, and that too, beyond the hope of reunion?—under which parents are exposed and sold in the market-place along with horses and cattle?—under which they are stripped and lashed,

and made to suffer those innumerable, and some of them, nameless indignities, that tend to generate in their children, who witness them, any feelings, rather than those of respect and honor, for parents thus degraded? Some of these nameless indignities are alluded to in a letter written to me from a slave state, in March, 1833. "In this place," says the writer, "I find a regular and a much frequented slave market, where thousands are yearly sold like cattle to the highest bidder. It is the opinion of gentlemen here, that not far from five hundred thousand dollars are yearly paid in this place for negroes; and at this moment, I can look from the window of my room and count six droves of from twenty to forty each, sitting in the market place for sale. This morning I witnessed the sale of twelve slaves, and I could but shudder at the language used and the liberties taken with the females!"

2d. As a proof, that in the kinds of servitude referred to, God did not invest Abraham, or any other person with that absolute ownership of his fellow-men, which is claimed by Southern slaveholders—I would remark, that He has made man accountable to Himself; but slavery makes him accountable to, and a mere appendage to his fellow-man. Slavery substitutes the will of a fallible fellow-man for that infallible rule of action—the will of God. The slave, instead of being allowed to make it the great end of his existence to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever, is degraded from his exalted nature, which borders upon angelic dignity, to be, to do, and to suffer what a mere man bids him be, do, and suffer.

The Southern slave would obey God in respect to marriage, and also to the reading and studying of His word. But this, as we have seen, is forbidden him. He may not marry; nor may he read the Bible. Again, he would obey God in the duties of secret and social prayer. But he may not attend the prayer-meeting—certainly not that of his choice; and instances are known, where the master has intruded upon the slave's secret audience with heaven, to teach him by the lash, or some other instrument of torture, that he would allow "no other God before" himself.

Said Joseph Mason, an intelligent colored man, who was born and bred near Richmond, in Virginia, in reply to my question whether he and his fellow-slaves cared about their souls—"We did not trouble ourselves about our souls; we were our masters' property and not our own; under their and not our own control; and we believed that our masters were responsible for our souls." This unconcern for their spiritual interests grew very naturally out of their relation to

their masters ; and were the relation ordained of God, the unconcern would, surely, be both philosophical and sinless.

God cannot approve of a system of servitude, in which the master is guilty of assuming absolute power—of assuming God's place and relation towards his fellow-men. Were the master, in every case, a wise and good man—as wise and good as is consistent with this wicked and heaven-daring assumption on his part—the condition of the slave would it is true, be far more tolerable, than it now is. But even then, we should protest as strongly as ever against slavery ; for it would still be guilty of its essential wickedness of robbing a man of his right to himself, and of robbing God of His right to him, and of putting these stolen rights into the hand of an erring mortal. Nay, if angels were constituted slaveholders, our objection to the relation would remain undiminished ; since there would still be the same robbery of which we now complain.

But you will say, that I have overlooked the servitude in which the Jews held strangers and foreigners ; and that it is on this, more than any other, that you rely for your justification of slavery. I will say nothing now of this servitude ; but before I close this communication, I will give my reasons for believing, that whatever was its nature, even if it were compulsory, it cannot be fairly pleaded in justification of slavery.

After you shall have allowed, as you will allow, that slavery, as it exists, is at war with God, you will be likely to say, that the fault is not in the theory of it ; but in the practical departure from that theory ; that it is not the system, but the practice under it, which is at war with God. Our concern, however, is with slavery as it is, and not with any theory of it. But to indulge you, we will look at the system of slavery, as it is presented to us, in the laws of the slave States ; and what do we find here ? Why, that the system is as bad as the practice under it. Here we find the most diabolical devices to keep millions of human beings in a state of heathenism—in the deepest ignorance and most loathsome pollution. But you will tell me, that I do not look far enough to find the true theory of slavery ; and that the cruelties and abominations, which the laws of the slave States have ingrafted on this theory, are not acknowledged by the good men in those States to be a part of the theory. Well, you shall have the benefit of this plea ; and I admit, for the sake of argument, that this theory of slavery, which lies far back, and out of sight of every thing visible and known about slavery, is right. And what does this admission avail you ? It is slavery as it is—as it is seen and known, that

the abolitionists are contending against. But, say you, to induce our forbearance, "We good men at the South are restoring slavery, as fast as we can, to what it should be; and we will soon make its erring practice quadrate with its perfect and sinless theory." Success to your endeavors! But let me ask these good men, whether similar representations would avail to make them forbearing towards any other class of offenders; and whether they would allow these offenders to justify the wickedness of their hands, by pleading the purity of their hearts. Suppose that I stand in court confessedly guilty of the crime of passing counterfeit money; and that I ask for my acquittal on the ground, that, notwithstanding I am practically wrong, I am, nevertheless, theoretically right. "Believe me," I say, in tones of deep and unfeigned pathos, and with a corresponding pressure of my hand upon my heart, "that the principles within are those of the purest morality; and that it is my faithful endeavor to bring my deportment, which, as you this day witness, is occasionally devious, into perfect conformity with my inward rectitude. My theory of honest and holy living is all that you could wish it to be. Be but patient, and you shall witness its beautiful exhibitions in my whole conduct." Now, you certainly would not have this plea turn to my advantage;—why then expect that your similar plea should be allowed?

We must continue to judge of slavery by what it is, and not by what you tell us it will, or may be. Until its character be righteous, we shall continue to condemn it; but when you shall have brought it back to your sinless and beautiful theory of it, it will have nothing to fear from the abolitionists. There are two prominent reasons, however, for believing that you will never present Southern slavery to us in this lovely character, the mere imagination of which is so dear to you. The first is, that you are doing nothing to this end. It is an indisputable fact that Southern slavery is continually getting wider and wider from God, and from an innocent theory of servitude; and the "good men at the South," of whom we have spoken, are not only doing nothing to arrest this increasing divergency, but they are actually favoring it. The writings of your Dewes, and Baxters, and Plummers, and Postells, and Andersons, and the proceedings of your ecclesiastical bodies, abundantly show this. Never, and the assertion is borne out by your statute books, as well as other evidences, has Southern slavery multiplied its abominations so rapidly, as within the last ten years; and never before had the Southern Church been so much engaged to defend and perpetuate these abominations. The other of these reasons for believing that Southern slavery will never



be conformed to your *beau ideal* of slavery, in which it is presupposed there are none but principles of righteousness, is, that on its first contact with these principles, it would "vanish into thin air," leaving "not a wreck behind." In proof of this, and I need not cite any other case, it would be immediate death to Southern slavery to concede to its subjects, God's institution of marriage; and hence it is, that its code forbids marriage. The rights of the husband in the wife, and of the wife in the husband, and of parents in their children, would stand directly in the way of that traffic in human flesh, which is the very life-blood of slavery; and the assumptions of the master would, at every turn and corner, be met and nullified by these rights; since all his commands to the children of these servants (for now they should no longer be called slaves) would be in submission to the paramount authority of the parents.\* And here, sir, you and I might bring our discussion to a close, by my putting the following questions to you, both of which your conscience would compel you to answer in the affirmative.

1st. Is not Southern slavery guilty of a most heaven-daring crime, in substituting concubinage for God's institution of marriage?

2d. Would not that slavery, and also every theory and modification of slavery, for which you may contend, come speedily to nought, if their subjects were allowed to marry? Slavery, being an abuse, is incapable of reformation. It dies, not only when you aim a fatal blow at its life principle—its foundation doctrine of man's right to property in man†—but it dies as surely, when you prune it of its manifold incidents of pollution and irreligion.

But it would be treating you indecorously to stop you at this stage of the discussion, before we are a third of the way through your book, and thus deny a hearing to the remainder of it. We will proceed to

\* I am aware that Professor Hodge asserts, that "slavery may exist without those laws which interfere with their (the slaves) marital or parental right." Now, this is a point of immense importance in the discussion of the question, whether slavery is sinful; and I, therefore, respectfully ask him either to retract the assertion, or to prove its correctness. Ten thousands of his fellow-citizens, to whom the assertion is utterly incredible, unite with me in this request. If he can show, that slavery does not "interfere with marital or parental rights," they will cease to oppose it. Their confident belief is, that slavery and marriage, whether considered in the light of a civil contract, or a scriptural institution, are entirely incompatible with each other.

† I mean by this phrase, "right to property in man," a right to hold man as property; and I do not see with what propriety certain writers construe it to mean, a property in the mere services of a man.

what you say of the slavery which existed in the time of the New Testament writers. Before we do so, however, let me call your attention to a few of the specimens of very careless reasoning in that part of your book, which we have now gone over. They may serve to inspire you with a modest distrust of the soundness of other parts of your argument.

After concluding that Abraham was a slaveholder, you quote the following language from the Bible; "Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." You then inquire, "How could this be true of Abraham, holding as he did, until he was an old man, more slaves than any man in Mississippi or Louisiana?" To be consistent with your design in quoting this passage, you must argue from it, that Abraham was perfect. But this he was not; and, therefore, your quotation is vain. Again, if the slaveholder would quiet his conscience with the supposition, that "Abraham held more slaves than any man in Mississippi or Louisiana," let him remember, that he had also more concubines (Gen. 25: 6) "than any man in Mississippi or Louisiana;" and, if Abraham's authority be in the one case conclusive for slaveholding, equally so must it be in the other, for concubinage.

Perhaps, in saying that "Abraham had more concubines than any man in Mississippi or Louisiana," I have done injustice to the spirit of propagation prevailing amongst the gentlemen of those States. It may be, that some of your planters quite distance the old patriarch in obedience to the command to "multiply and replenish the earth." I am correctly informed, that a planter in Virginia, who counted, I know not how many slaves upon his plantation, confessed on his death-bed, that his licentiousness had extended to every adult female amongst them. This planter was a near relative of the celebrated Patrick Henry. It may be, that you have planters in Mississippi and Louisiana, who avail themselves to the extent that he did, of the power which slaveholding gives to pollute and destroy. The hundreds of thousands of mulattoes, who constitute the Southern commentary on the charge, that the abolitionists design amalgamation, bear witness that this planter was not singular in his propensities. I do not know what you can do with this species of your population. Besides, that it is a standing and deep reproach on Southern chastity, it is not a little embarrassing and puzzling to those who have received the doctrine, that the descendants of Africa amongst us must be returned to the land of their ancestors. How the poor mulatto shall be disposed of, under this doctrine, between the call which Africa

makes for him, on the one hand, and that which some state of Europe sends out for him on the other, is a problem more difficult of solution than that which the contending mothers brought before the matchless wisdom of Solomon.

In the paragraph, which relates to the fourth and tenth commandments, there is another specimen of your loose reasoning. You say, that the language, "In it (the Sabbath) thou shalt do no work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant," "recognises the authority of the master over the servant." I grant, that it does : but does it at all show, that these servants were slaves? Does it recognise any more authority than the master should exercise over his voluntary servants? Should not the head of a family restrain all his servants, as well the voluntary as the involuntary, from unnecessary labor on the Sabbath? You also say, that the tenth commandment "recognizes servants as the *property* of their masters." But how does it appear from the language of this commandment, that the man servant and maid servant are property any more than the wife is? We will proceed, however, to the third section of your book.

Your acquaintance with history has enabled you to show some of the characteristics and fruits of Greek and Roman slavery. You state the facts, that the subjects of this slavery were "absolutely the property of their masters"—that they "were used like dogs"—that "they were forbidden to learn any liberal art or perform any act worthy of their masters"—that "once a day they received a certain number of stripes for fear they should forget they were slaves"—that, at one time, "sixty thousand of them in Sicily and Italy were chained and confined to work in dungeons"—that "in Rome there was a continual market for slaves," and that "the slaves were commonly exposed for sale naked"—"that, when old, they were turned away," and that too by a master, highly esteemed for his superior virtues, to starve to death"—that they were thrown into ponds to be food for fish—that they were in the city of Athens near twenty times as numerous as free persons—that there were in the Roman Empire sixty millions of slaves to twenty millions of freemen—and that many of the Romans had five thousand, some ten thousand, and others twenty thousand.

And now, for what purpose is your recital of these facts?—not, for its natural effect of awakening, in your readers, the utmost abhorrence of slavery :—no—but for the strange purpose (the more strange for being in the breast of a minister of the gospel) of showing your readers, that even Greek and Roman slavery was innocent, and

agreeable to God's will; and that, horrid as are the fruits you describe, the tree, which bore them, needed but to be dug about and pruned—not to be cut down. This slavery is innocent, you insist, because the New Testament does not show, that it was specifically condemned by the Apostles. By the same logic, the races, the games, the dramatic entertainments, and the shows of gladiators, which abounded in Greece and Rome, were, likewise, innocent, because the New Testament does not show a specific condemnation of them by the apostles.\* But, although the New Testament does not show such condemnation, does it necessarily follow, that they were silent, in relation to these sins? Or, because the New Testament does not specifically condemn Greek and Roman slavery, may we, therefore, infer, that the Apostles did not specifically condemn it? Look through the published writings of many of the eminent divines, who have lived in modern times, and have written and published much for the instruction of the churches, and you will not find a line in them against gambling or theatres or the slave-trade;—in some of them, not a line against the very common sin of drunkenness. Think you, therefore, that they never spoke or wrote against these things? It would be unreasonable to expect to find, in print, their sentiments against all, even of the crying sins of their times. But how much more unreasonable is it to expect to find in the few pages of the Apostles' published letters, the whole of which can be read in a few hours, their sentiments in relation to all the prominent sins of the age in which they lived! And far greater still is the unreasonableness of setting them down, as favorable to all practices which these letters do not specifically condemn.

It may be, that the Saviour and the Apostles, in the course of their teachings, both oral and written, did specify sins to a far greater extent, than they are supposed to have done. It may be, that their followers had much instruction, in respect to the great sin of slavery. We must bear in mind, that but a very small part of that Divine instruction, which, on the testimony of an Apostle, "the world itself could not contain if written," has come down to us. Of the writ-

\* Prof. Hodge says, if the apostles did abstain from declaring slavery to be sinful, "it must have been, because they did not consider it as, in itself, a crime. No other solution of their conduct is consistent with their truth or fidelity." But he believes that they did abstain from so doing; and he believes this, on the same evidence, on which he believes, that they abstained from declaring the races, games, &c., above enumerated, to be sinful. His own mode of reasoning, therefore, brings him unavoidably to the conclusion, that these races, games, &c., were not sinful.

ings of our Saviour we have nothing. Of those of his Apostles a very small part. It is probable, that, during his protracted ministry, the learned apostle to the Gentiles wrote many letters on religious subjects to individuals and to churches. So also of the immense amount of instruction, which fell from the lips of the Apostles, but very little is preserved. It was Infinite Wisdom, however, which determined the size of the New, as well as of the Old Testament, and of what kinds and portions of the Saviour's and the Apostles' instructions it should consist. For obvious considerations, it is made up, in a great measure, of general truths and propositions. Its limited size, if no other reason, accounts for this. But, these general truths and propositions are as comprehensive as the necessity of the case requires; and, carried out into all their suitable applications, they leave no sin unforbidden. Small as is the New Testament, it is as large as we need. It instructs us in relation to all our duties. It is as full on the subject of slavery, as is necessary; and, if we will but obey its directions, that bear on this subject, and "love one another," and love our neighbors as ourselves, and, as we would that men should do to us, do "also to them likewise," and "remember them, that are in bonds as bound with them," and "give unto servants, that which is just and equal"—not a vestige of this abomination will remain.

For the sake of the argument, I will admit, that the Apostles made no specific attack on slavery;\* and that they left it to be reached and

\* This is no small admission in the face of the passage, in the first chapter of Timothy, which particularizes manstealing, as a violation of the law of God. I believe all scholars will admit, that one of the crimes referred to by the Apostle, is kidnapping. But is not kidnapping an integral and most vital part of the system of slavery? And is not the slaveholder guilty of this crime? Does he not, indeed, belong to a class of kidnappers stamped with peculiar meanness? The pirate, on the coast of Africa, has to cope with the strength and adroitness of mature years. To get his victim into his clutches is a deed of daring and of peril demanding no little praise, upon the principles of the world's "code of honor." But the proud chivalry of the South is securely employed in kidnapping newborn infants. The pirate, in the one case, soothes his conscience with the thought, that the bloody savages merit no better treatment, than they are receiving at his hands:—but the pirate, in the other, can have no such plea—for they, whom he kidnaps, are untainted with crime.

And what better does it make the case for you, if we adopt the translation of "men stealers?" Far better, you will say, for, on the authority of Othello himself,

"He that is robb'd—  
Let him not know it, and he's not robbed at all."

But, your authority is not conclusive. The crime of the depredation is none the less, because the subject is ignorant or unconscious of it. It is true, the slave, who

overthrown, provided it be sinful, by the general principles and instructions which they had inculcated. But you will say, that it was their practice, in addition to inculcating such principles and instructions, to point out sins and reprove them:—and you will ask, with great pertinence and force, why they did not also point out and reprove slavery, which, in the judgment of abolitionists, is to be classed with the most heinous sins. I admit, that there is no question addressed to abolitionists, which, after the admission I have made for them, it is less easy to answer; and I admit further, that they are bound to answer it. I will proceed to assign what to me appear to be some of the probable reasons, why the Apostles specified the sins of lying, covetousness, stealing, &c., and, agreeably to the admission, which lays me under great disadvantage, did not specify slavery.

1st. The book of Acts sets forth the fundamental doctrines and requirements of Christianity. It is to the letters of the Apostles we are to look for extended specifications of right and wrong affections, and right and wrong practices. Why do these letters omit to specify the sin of slaveholding? Because they were addressed to professing Christians exclusively; who, far more emphatically than now, were “the base things of the world,” and were in circumstances to be slaves, rather than slaveholders. Doubtless, there were many slaves amongst them—but I cannot admit, that there were slaveholders. There is not the least probability, that slaveholding was a prevalent sin amongst primitive Christians.\* Instructions to them on that sin might have been almost as superfluous, as would be lectures on the sin of luxury, addressed to the poor Greenland disciples, whose poverty compels them to subsist on filthy oil. No one, acquainted with the history of their lives, believes that the Apostles were slaveholders. They labored, “working with (their) own hands.” The

never possessed liberty—who was kidnapped at his birth—may not grieve, under the absence of it, as he does, from whose actual and conscious possession it had been violently taken: but the robbery is alike plain, and is coupled with a meanness, in the one case, which does not disgrace it in the other.

\* How strongly does the following extract from the writings of the great and good Augustine, who lived in the fourth century, argue, that slaveholding was not a prevalent sin amongst primitive Christians!

“Non oportet Christianum possidere servum quomodo equum aut argentum. Quis dicere audeat ut vestimentum eum debere contemni? Hominem namque homo tamquam seipsum diligere debet cui ab omnium Domino, ut inimicos diligat, imperatur.” *A Christian ought not to hold his servant as he does his horse or his money. Who dares say that he should be thought as lightly of as a garment? For man, whom the Lord of all has commanded to love his enemies, should love his fellow-man as himself.*

supposition, that they were slaveholders, is inconsistent with their practice, and with the tenor of their instructions to others on the duty of manual labor. But if the Apostles were not slaveholders, why may we suppose, that their disciples were? At the South, it is "like people, like priest," in this matter. There, the minister of the gospel thinks, that he has as good right to hold slaves, as has his parishioner: and your Methodists go so far, as to say, that even a bishop has as good right, as any other person, to have slaves

"————— to fan him while he sleeps,  
And tremble when he wakes."

Indeed, they already threaten to separate from their Northern brethren, unless this right be conceded. But have we not other and conclusive evidence, that primitive Christians were not slaveholders? We will cite a few passages from the Bible to show, that it was not the will of the Apostles to have their disciples hold manual labor in disrepute, as it is held, in all slaveholding communities. "Do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you." "For this we commanded you, that, if any would not work, neither should he eat." "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." In bringing the whole verse into this last quotation, I may have displeased you. I am aware, that you slaveholders proudly and indignantly reject the applicableness to yourselves of the first phrase in this verse, and also of the maxim, that "the partaker of stolen goods is as bad as the thief." I am aware, that you insist, that the kidnapping of a man, or getting possession of him, after he has been kidnapped, is not to be compared, if indeed it can be properly called theft at all, with the crime of stealing a *thing*. It occurs to me, that if a shrewd lawyer had you on trial for theft, he would say, that you were *estopped* from going into this distinction between a *man* and a *thing*, inasmuch as, by your own laws, the slave is expressly declared to be a *chattel*—is expressly *elevated* into a *thing*. He would say, however competent it may be for others to justify themselves on the ground, that it was but a *man*, and not a *thing*, they had stolen; your own statutes, which, with magic celerity, convert stolen men into things, make such a plea, on your part, utterly inadmissible. He would have you as fast, as though the stolen goods, in your hands, were a bushel of wheat, or some other important *thing*, instead of a *mere man*.

But, if you are not yet convinced that primitive Christians were not

slaveholders, let me cite another passage to show you, how very improbable it is, that they stood in this capacity:—"all, that believed, had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Now I do not say, that all the primitive believers did so. But if a portion of them did, and met with the Apostles' approbation in it, is it at all probable, that a course, so diverse from it, as that of slaveholding in the Church, met likewise with their approbation?

2d. I go on to account for the Apostles' omission to specify slavery.

Criminality is not always obvious, in proportion to its extent. The sin of the traffic in intoxicating liquors, was, until the last few years, almost universally unfelt and unperceived. But now, we meet with men, who, though it was "in all good conscience," that they were once engaged in it, would not resume it for worlds; and who see more criminality, in taking money from a fellow man, in exchange for the liquor which intoxicates him, than in simple theft. However it may be with others, in this employment, they now see, that, for them to traffic in intoxicating liquors, would be to stain themselves with the twofold crime of robbery and murder. How is it, that good men ever get into this employment?—and, under what influences and by what process of thought, do they come to the determination to abandon it? The former is accounted for, by the fact, that they grow up—have their education—their moral and intellectual training—in the midst of a public opinion, and even of laws also, which favor and sanction the employment. The latter is accounted for, by the fact, that they are brought, in the merciful providence of God, to observe and study and understand the consequences of their employment—especially on those who drink their liquor—the liquor which they sell or make, or, with no less criminality, furnish the materials for making. These consequences they find to be "evil, only evil, and that continually." They find, that this liquor imparts no benefit to them who drink it, but tends to destroy, and, oftentimes, does destroy, their healths and lives. To continue, therefore, in an employment in which they receive their neighbor's money, without returning him an equivalent, or any portion of an equivalent, and, in which they expose both his body and soul to destruction, is to make themselves, in their own judgments, virtually guilty of theft and murder.

Thus it is in the case of a national war, waged for conquest. Christians have taken part in it; and, because they were blinded by a wrong education, and were acting in the name of their country and



under the impulses of patriotism, they never suspected that they were doing the devil, instead of "God, service." But when, in the kind providence of God, one of these butchers of their fellow beings is brought to pause and consider his ways, and to resolve his enormous and compound sin into its elements of wickedness,—into the lies, theft, covetousness, adultery, murder, and what not of crime, which enter into it,—he is amazed that he has been so "slow of heart to believe," and abandon the iniquity of his deeds.

What I have said to show that Christians, even in enlightened and gospelized lands, may be blind to the great wickedness of certain customs and institutions, serves to introduce the remark, that there were probably some customs and institutions, in the time of the Apostles, on which it would have been even worse than lost labor for them to make direct attacks. Take, for example, the kind of war of which we have been speaking. If there are reasons why the modern Christian can be insensible to the sin of it, there are far stronger reasons why the primitive Christian could be. If the light and instruction which have been accumulating for eighteen centuries, are scarcely sufficient to convince Christians of its wickedness, is it reasonable to suppose that, at the commencement of this long period, they could have been successfully taught it? Consider, that at that time the literature and sentiment of the world were wholly on the side of war; and especially, consider how emphatically the authority of civil government and of human law was in favor of its rightfulness. Now, to how great an extent such authority covers over and sanctifies sin, may be inferred from the fact, that there are many, who, notwithstanding they believe slavery to be a most Heaven-daring sin, yet, because it is legalized and under the wing of civil government, would not have it spoken against. Even Rev. Dr. Miller, in certain resolutions which he submitted to the last General Assembly, indicated his similar reverence for human laws; and the lamented Dr. Rice distinctly recognises, in his letter to Mr. Maxwell, the doctrine that the Church is bound to be quiet about every sin which the civil government adopts and whitewashes. That the Christian Spectator should indorse the Doctor's sentiments on this point is still more worthy of remark than that he should utter them. Indeed, I judge from what you say on the 68th and 69th pages of your book, that you are yourself opposed to calling in question the morality of that which civil government approves. But, to doubt the infallibility of civil government,—to speak against Cæsar,—was manifestly held to be quite as presumptuous in the time of the Apostles as it is now.

Another reason why an Apostle would probably have deemed it hopeless to attempt to persuade his disciples, immediately and directly, of the sin of war, is to be found in the fact of their feeble and distorted perception of truth and duty. We, whose advantage it is to have lived all our days in the light of the gospel, and whose ancestors, from time immemorial, had the like precious advantage, can hardly conceive how very feeble and distorted was that perception. But, consider for a moment who those disciples were. They had, most of them, but just been taken out of the gross darkness and filth of heathenism. In reading accounts which missionaries give of converted heathen—of such, even, as have for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, been reputed to be pious—you are, doubtless, often surprised to find how grossly erroneous are their moral perceptions. Their false education still cleaves to them. They are yet, to a great extent, in the mould of a corrupted public opinion; and, as far from having a clear discernment of moral truth, as were the partially unsealed eyes which saw “men, as trees, walking.” The first letter to the Church at Corinth, proves that the new principles implanted in its members had not yet purged out the leaven of their old wickedness; and that their conceptions of Christian purity and conduct were sadly defective. As it was with the Corinthian Christians, so was it to a great extent with the other Christians of that age. Now, if the Apostles did not directly teach the primitive believers that wars, and theatres, and games, and slavery, are sinful, it is because they thought it more fit to exercise their ignorant pupils chiefly in the mere alphabet and syllables of Christianity. (Acts xv, 28, 29.) The construction of words and sentences would naturally follow. The rudiments of the gospel, if once possessed by them, would be apt to lead them on to greater attainments. Indeed, the love, peace, truth, and other elements of holy living inculcated by the Apostles, would, if turned to all proper account, be fatal to every, even the most gigantic, system of wickedness. Having these elements in their minds and hearts, they would not fail of condemning the great and compound sin of war whenever they should be led to take it up, examine it, resolve it into its constituent parts, and lay these parts for comparison, by the side of those elements. But, such an advance was hardly to be expected from many of these heathen converts during the brief period in which they enjoyed Apostolic instruction; and it is but too probable, that most of them died in great ignorance of the sin of national wars. Converts from the heathen, in the present age, when

conviction of the sinfulness of war is spreading in different parts of Christendom, would be more likely to imbibe correct views of it.

The Apostles "fed with milk" before they fed with meat, as did our Saviour, who declared, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." In every community, the foundation principles of righteousness must be laid, before there can be fulcrums for the levers to be employed in overthrowing the sins which prevail in it.

You will doubtless, then, agree with me, that it is not probable that the Apostles taught their heathen converts, directly and specifically, the sinfulness of war. But slaves, in that age, with the exception of the comparative few who were reduced to slavery on account of the crimes of which they had been judicially convicted, were the spoils of war. How often in that age, as was most awfully the fact, on the final destruction of Jerusalem, were the slave-markets of the world glutted by the captives of war! Until, therefore, they should be brought to see the sinfulness of war, how could they see the sinfulness of so direct and legitimate a fruit of it as slavery?—and, if the Apostles thought their heathen converts too weak to be instructed in the sinfulness of war, how much more would they abstain from instructing them, directly and specifically, in the sin of slavery!

3d. In proceeding with my reasons why the Apostles did not extend their specification of sins to slavery, I remark, that it is apparent from the views we have taken, and from others which might have been taken, that nothing would have been gained by their making direct and specific attacks on the institutions of the civil governments under which they lived. Indeed, much might have been lost by their doing so. Weak converts, with still many remains of heathenism about them, might in this wise have been incurably prejudiced against truths, which, by other modes of teaching,—by general and indirect instructions,—would probably have been lodged in their minds. And there is another point of view in which vastly more, even their lives, might have been lost, by the Apostles making the direct and specific attacks referred to. I know that you ridicule the idea of their consulting their personal safety. But what right have you to do so? They did, on many occasions, consult the security of their lives. They never perilled them needlessly, and through a presumptuous reliance on God. It is the devil, who, in a garbled quotation from the Scriptures, lays down, in unlimited terms, the proposition, that God will keep his children. But, God promises them protection only when they are in their own proper ways. The Saviour himself consulted the safety of his life, until his "time" had "full come;" and

his command to his Apostles was, "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." If you suppose me to admit for a moment, that regard for the safety of their lives ever kept them from the way of their duty, you are entirely mistaken; and, if you continue to assert, in the face of my reasoning to the contrary, that on the supposition of the sinfulness of slavery, their omission to make direct and specific attacks on it would have been a failure of their duty, then I can only regret that this reasoning has had no more influence upon you.

I observe that Professor Hodge agrees with you, that if slavery is sin, it would have been specifically attacked by the Apostles at any hazard to their lives. This is his conclusion, because they did not hesitate to specify and rebuke idolatry. Here is another of the Professor's sophisms. The fact, that the Apostles preached against idolatry, is no reason at all why, if slavery is sin, they would have preached against that also. On the one hand, it is not conceivable that the gospel can be preached where there is idolatry, without attacking it: for, in setting forth the true God to idolaters, the preacher must denounce their false gods. On the other hand, gospel sermons can be preached without number, and the true God presented, not only in a nation of idolaters, but elsewhere, without one allusion being made to such crying sins as slavery, lewdness, and intemperance.

In the same connexion, Professor Hodge makes the remark: "We do not expect them (our missionaries) to refrain from denouncing the institutions of the heathen as sinful, because they are popular, or intimately interwoven with society." If he means by this language, that it is the duty of missionaries on going into a heathen nation, to array themselves against the civil government, and to make direct and specific attacks on its wicked nature and wicked administration, then is he at issue, on this point, with the whole Christian public; and, if he does not mean this, or what amounts to this, I do not see how his remark will avail any thing, in his attempt to show that the Apostles made such attacks on whatever sinful institutions came under their observation.

What I have said on a former page shows sufficiently how fit it is for missionaries to the heathen, more especially in the first years of their efforts among them, to labor to instruct their ignorant pupils in the elementary principles of Christianity, rather than to call their attention to the institutions of civil government, the sinfulness of which they would not be able to perceive until they had been grounded

in those elementary principles; and the sinfulness of which, more than of any thing else, their prejudices would forbid them to suspect. Another reason why the missionary to the heathen should not directly, and certainly not immediately, assail their civil governments, is that he would thereby arouse their jealousies to a pitch fatal to his influence, his usefulness, and most probably his life; and another reason is, that this imprudence would effectually close the door, for a long time, against all efforts, even the most judicious, to spread the gospel amongst a people so needlessly and greatly prejudiced against it by an unwise and abrupt application of its principles. For instance, what folly and madness it would be for our missionaries to Burmah, to make a direct assault on the political institutions of that country! How fatal would it be to their lives, and how incalculably injurious to the cause entrusted to their hands! And, if this can be said of them, after they have spent ten, fifteen, and twenty years, in efforts to bring that portion of the heathen world to a knowledge and love of the truth, how much more emphatically could it be said if they had been in the field of their labors but three or four years! And yet, even this short space of time exceeds the average period of the Apostles' labor among those different portions of the heathen world which they visited;—labor, too, it must be remembered, not of the whole, nor even of half of “the twelve.”

That the Apostles could not have made direct attacks on the institutions of the Roman government, but at the expense of their lives, is not to be doubted. Our Saviour well knew how fatal was the jealousy of that government to the man who was so unhappy as to have excited it; and he accordingly avoided the excitement of it, as far as practicable and consistent. His ingenious and beautiful disposition of the question, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not,” is among the instances, in which He studied to shun the displeasure of the civil government. Pilate gave striking evidence of his unwillingness to excite the jealousy of his government, when, every other expedient to induce him to consent to the Saviour's death having failed, the bare charge, utterly unproven and groundless, that the Divine prisoner had put forth pretensions, interfering with Cæsar's rights, availed to procure His death-warrant from the hands of that truth-convicted, but man-fearing governor. Had it not availed, Pilate would have been exposed to the suspicion of disloyalty to his government; and so perilous was this suspicion, that he was ready, at any expense to his conscience and sense of justice, to avoid incurring it.

A direct attack on Roman slavery, as it would have called in

question the rightfulness of war—the leading policy of the Roman government—would, of course, have been peculiarly perilous to its presumptuous author. No person could have made this attack, and lived; or, if possibly he might have escaped the vengeance of the government, do we not know too much of the deadly wrath of slaveholders, to believe that he could have also escaped the summary process of Lynch law? If it be at the peril of his life that a Northern man travels in the Southern States,—and that, too, whether he do or do not say a word about slavery, or even whether he be or be not an abolitionist;—if your leading men publicly declare, that it is your religious duty to put to an immediate death, whenever they come within your power, those who presume to say that slavery is sin (and such a declaration did a South Carolina gentleman make on the floor of congress, respecting the inconsiderable person who is addressing you);—and, if your professing Christians, not excepting ministers of the gospel, thirst for the blood of abolitionists,\* as I will abund-

\* I will relate an incident, to show what a fiend even woman, gentle, lovely woman, may become, after she has fallen under the sway of the demon of slavery. Said a lady of Savannah, on a visit in the city of New York, “I wish he (Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Cox) would come to Savannah. I should love to see him tarred and feathered, and his head cut off and carried on a pole around Savannah.” This lady is a professing Christian. Her language stirs me up to retaliate upon her, and to express the wish that she would come to the town, and even to the dwelling, in which Dr. Cox resides. She would find that man of God—that man of sanctified genius—as glad to get his enemies into his hands, as she would be to get him into the hands of his enemies:—not, however, for the purpose of disgracing and decapitating them, but, that he might pour out upon them the forgiveness and love of his generous and *abolitionized* heart. In the city of New York there are thousands of whole-souled abolitionists. What a striking testimony is it, in behalf of their meekness and forbearance, when a southern fury is perfectly secure, in belching out such words of wrath in the midst of them! We abolitionists never love our principles better, than when we see the slaveholder feeling safe amongst us. No man has been more abusive of us than Governor McDuffie; and yet, were he to travel in the Northern States, he would meet with no unkindness at the hands of any abolitionist. On the other hand, let it be known to the governor, that he has within his jurisdiction a prominent abolitionist—one, whose heart of burning love has made him specially anxious to persuade the unfortunate slaveholder to be just to himself, to his fellow men, and to his God,—and the governor, true to the horrid sentiments of his famous message, would advise that he be “put to death without benefit of clergy.” Let slaveholders say what they will about our blood-thirstiness, there is not one of them who fears to put himself in our power. The many of them, who have been beneath my roof, and the roofs of other abolitionists, have manifested their confidence in our kindness. Were a stranger to the institution of slavery to learn, in answer to his inquiries, that “an abolitionist” is “an outlaw amongst slaveholders,” and that “a slaveholder” is “the kindly entertained guest of abolitionists,”—here would be a puzzle indeed. But the solution of it

antly show, if you require proof;—if, in a gospel land, all this be so, then I put it to your candor, whether it can reasonably be supposed that the Apostles would have been allowed to attack slavery in the midst of heathen slaveholders. Why it is that slaveholders will not allow a word to be breathed against slavery, I cannot, perhaps, correctly judge. Abolitionists think that this unwillingness denotes that man is unfit for absolute power over his fellow men. They think as unfavorably of the influence of this power on the slaveholder, as your own Jefferson did. They think that it tends to make him impatient of contradiction, self-willed, supercilious, cruel, murderous, devilish; and they think that they can establish this opinion, not by the soundest philosophy only, but by the pages of many of your own writers, and by those daily scenes of horrid brutality which make the Southern States, in the sight both of God and man, one of the most frightful and loathsome portions of the world—of the whole world—barbarous as well as civilized.

I need not render any more reasons why the Apostles did not specifically attack slavery; but I will reply to a question, which I am sure will be upon your lips all the time you are reading those I have rendered. This question is, “If the Apostles did not make such an attack on slavery, why may the American abolitionists?” I answer, that the difference between the course of the abolitionists and of the Apostles, in this matter, is justified by the difference in their circumstances. Professor Hodge properly says, that our course should be like theirs, “unless it can be shown that their circumstances were so different from ours, as to make the rule of duty different in the two cases.” And he as properly adds, “the obligation to point out and establish this difference rests upon the abolitionists.”

The reasons I have given, why the Apostles did not directly attack slavery, do not apply to the abolitionists. The arm of civil power does not restrain us from attacking it. To open our lips against the policy and institutions of civil government is not certain death. A despotic government restricted the efforts of the Apostles to do good. But we live under governments which afford the widest scope for exertions to bless our fellow men and honor God. Now, if we may not avail ourselves of this advantage, simply because the Apostles did not have it to avail themselves of, then whatever other interests may prosper under a republican government, certain it is, that the cause

would not fail to be as honorable to the persecuted man of peace, as it would be disgraceful to the bloody advocate and executioner of Lynch law.

of truth and righteousness is not to be benefited by it. Far better never to have had our boasted form of government, if, whilst it extends the freedom and multiplies the facilities of the wicked, it relieves the righteous of none of the restrictions of a despotic government. Again, there is a religious conscience all over this land, and an enlightened and gospel sense of right and wrong; on which we can and do (as in your Introduction you concede is the fact) bring our arguments against slavery to bear with mighty power. But, on the other hand, the creating of such a conscience and such a sense, in the heathen and semi-heathen amongst whom they lived and labored, was the first, and appropriate, and principal work of the Apostles. To employ, therefore, no other methods for the moral and religious improvement of the people of the United States, than were employed by the Apostles for that of the people of the Roman empire, is as absurd as it would be to put the highest and lowest classes in a school to the same lessons; or a raw apprentice to those higher branches of his trade which demand the skill of an experienced workman.

I am here reminded of what Professor Hodge says were the means relied on by the Saviour and Apostles for abolishing slavery. "It was," says he, "by teaching the true nature, dignity, equality, and destiny of men; by inculcating the principles of justice and love; and by leaving these principles to produce their legitimate effects in ameliorating the condition of all classes of society." I would not speak disparagingly of such a course of instruction; so far from it, I am ready to admit that it is indispensable for the removal of evils, in every age and among every people. When general instructions of this character shall have ceased to be given, then will all wholesome reforms have ceased also. But, I cannot approve of the Professor's object in this remark. This object is to induce his readers to believe, that these abstract and general instructions are all that is needed to effect the termination of slavery. Now, I maintain that one thing more is wanting; and that is, the application of these instructions—of the principles contained in them—to the evil in hand. As well may it be supposed, that the mechanic can accomplish his work without the application, and by the mere possession, of his tools, as that a given reformation can be effected by unapplied general principles. Of these principles, American philanthropists have been possessed from time immemorial; and yet all the while American slavery has been flourishing and growing strong. Of late, however, these principles have been brought to bear upon the system, and it manifestly is already giving way. The groans of the monster prove that



those rays of truth, which did not disturb him whilst they continued to move in the parallel lines of abstractions and generalities, make it quite too hot for him since they are converged to a burning focus upon his devoted head. Why is it, for example, that the influence of the Boston Recorder and New-York Observer—why is it, that the influence of most of our titled divines—is decidedly hostile to the abolition of slavery? It is not because they are deficient in just general sentiments and principles respecting man's duties to God and his fellow man. It is simply because they stand opposed to the application of these sentiments and principles to the evil in question; or, in other words, stand opposed to the Anti-Slavery Society, which is the chosen lens of Divine Providence for turning these sentiments and principles, with all the burning, irresistible power of their concentration, against a giant wickedness. What is the work of the Temperance Societies, but to make a specific application of general truths and principles to the vice of intemperance? And the fact, that from the time of Noah's intoxication, until the organization of the American Temperance Society, the desolating tide of intemperance had been continually swelling, proves that this reliance on unapplied principles, however sound—this "faith without works"—is utterly vain. Nathan found that nothing, short of a specific application of the principles of righteousness, would answer in the case of the sin of adultery. He had to abandon all generalities and circuitousness, and come plump upon the royal sinner with his "Thou art the man." Those divines, whose policy it is to handle slaveholders "with gloves," if they must handle them at all, doubtless regard Nathan as an exceedingly impolite preacher.

But, not only is it far less difficult to instruct the people of the United States than it was the people of the Roman Empire, in the sin of slavery; it is also—for the reason that the sin is ours, to a far greater extent, than it was theirs—much more important for us than for them to be instructed in it. They had no share in the government which upheld it. They could not abolish it by law. But, on the other hand, the people of the United States are themselves the government of their country. They are the co-sovereigns of their nation. They uphold slavery by law, and they can put it down by law. In this point of view, therefore, slavery is an incomparably greater sin in us, than it was in them.

Only one other reason will be given why it is more needful to overthrow American, than it was to overthrow Roman slavery. The Church was then but a handful of "strangers scattered throughout"

the heathen world. It was made up of those who had little influence and who were esteemed "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things." It had, probably, little, if any thing, to do with slavery, except to suffer its rigors in the persons of many of its members. But here, the Church, comprising no very small proportion of the whole population, and exerting a mighty influence for good or ill on the residue, is tainted, yes, rotten with slavery. In this contrast, we not only see another reason why the destruction of American slavery is more important than was that of Roman slavery; but we also see, that the Apostles could have been little, if at all, actuated by that motive, which is more urgent than any other in the breasts of the American abolitionists—the motive of purging the Church of slavery.

To return to what you say of the abominations and horrors of Greek and Roman slavery:—I should be doing you great injustice, were I to convey the idea that you approve of them. It is admitted that you disapprove of them; and, it is also admitted, that no responsibility for them rests on the relation of slaveholder and slave, if that relation have, as you labor to show, the stamp of Divine approbation. You say, that slavery, like marriage, is an institution sanctioned by the New Testament; and that, therefore, neither for the evils which attend it, nor for any other cause, is it to be argued against. This is sound reasoning, on your part; and, if your premises are correct, there is no resisting your deduction. We are, in that case, not only not to complain of the institution of slavery, but we are to be thankful for it. Considering, however, that the whole fabric of your argument, in the principal or New Testament division of your book, is based on the alleged fact that the New Testament approves of slavery, it seems to me that you have contented yourself, and sought to make your readers contented, with very slender evidences of the truth of this proposition. These evidences are, mainly—that the New Testament does not declare slavery to be a sin: and, that the Apostles enjoin upon masters and servants their respective duties; and this, too, in the same connexion in which they make similar injunctions upon those who stand in the confessedly proper relations of life—the husband and wife, the parent and child. Your other evidences, that the New Testament approves of slavery, unimportant as they are, will not be left unnoticed.

I have attempted to show, that the omission of the New Testament to declare slavery to be a sin, is not proof that it is not a sin. I pass on to show, that the Apostolic injunction of duties upon masters and servants does not prove that slavery is sinless.

I have now reached another grand fallacy in your book. It is also found in Professor Hodge's article. You, gentlemen, take the liberty to depart from our standard English translation of the Bible, and to substitute "slaveholder" for "master"—"slave" for "servant"—and, in substance, "emperor" for "ruler"—and "subject of an imperial government" for "subject of civil government generally." I know that this substitution well suits your purposes: but, I know not by what right you make it. Professor Hodge tells the abolitionists, certainly without much respect for either their intelligence or piety, that "it will do no good (for them) to attempt to tear the Bible to pieces." There is but too much evidence, that he himself has not entirely refrained from the folly and crime, which he is so ready to impute to others.

I will proceed to offer some reasons for the belief, that when the Apostles enjoined on masters and servants their respective duties, they had reference to servitude in general, and not to any modification of it.

1st. You find passages in the New Testament, where you think *despotes* refers to a person who is a slaveholder, and *doulos* to a person who is a slave. Admit that you are right: but this (which seems to be your only ground for it) does not justify you in translating these words "slaveholder" and "slave," whenever it may be advantageous to your side of the question to have them thus translated. These words have a great variety of meanings. For instance, there are passages in the New Testament where *despotes* means "God"—"Jesus Christ"—"Head of a family:" and where *doulos* means "a minister or agent"—"a subject of a king"—"a disciple or follower of Christ." *Despotes* and *doulos* are the words used in the original of the expression: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:" *doulos* in that of the expressions, "servant of Christ," and "let him be servant of all." Profane writers also use these words in various senses. My full belief is, that these words were used in both a generic and special sense, as is the word corn, which denotes bread-stuffs in general, and also a particular kind of them; as is the word meat, the meaning of which is, sometimes, confined to flesh that is eaten, and, at other times, as is frequently the case in the Scriptures, extends to food in general; and, as is the word servant, which is suitable, either in reference to a particular form of servitude, or to servitude in general. There is a passage in the second chapter of Acts, which is, of itself, perhaps, sufficient to convince an unbiassed mind, that the Apostles used the word *doulos* in a generic, as well as

special sense. *Doulos* and *doule* are the words in the phrase : " And on my servants and on my handmaidens." A reference to the prophecy as it stands, in Joel 2 : 28, 29, makes it more obvious, that persons in servitude are referred to under the words *doulos* and *doule* : and, that the predicted blessing was to be shed upon persons of all ages, classes, and conditions—upon old men and young men—upon sons and daughters—and upon man-servants and maid-servants. But, under the interpretation of those, who, like Professor Hodge and yourself, confine the meaning of *doulos* and *doule* to a species of servants, the prophecy would have reference to persons of all ages, classes, and conditions—*excepting certain descriptions of servants*. Under this interpretation, we are brought to the absurd conclusion, that the spirit is to be poured out upon the master and his slaves—but *not upon his hired servants*.

I trust that enough has been said, under this my first head, to show that the various senses in which the words *despotes* and *doulos* are employed, justify me in taking the position, that whenever we meet with them, we are to determine, from the nature of the case, and from the connexion in which they are used, whether they refer to servitude in general, or to a species of it.

2d. The confinement of the meaning of the words in question supposes, what neither religion nor common sense allows us to suppose, that slaveholders and slaves, despots and those in subjection to them, were such especial favorites of the Apostles, as to obtain from them specific instructions in respect to their relative duties, whilst all other masters and servants, and all other rulers and subjects, throughout all future time, were left unprovided with such instructions. According to this supposition, when slavery and despotism shall, agreeably to Professor Hodge's expectations, have entirely ceased, there will be not one master nor servant, not one ruler nor subject in the whole earth, to fall, as such, under the Apostolic injunctions.

3d. You admit that there were hirelings, in a community of primitive believers ; and I admit, for the moment, that there were slaves in it. Now, under my interpretation of the Apostolic injunction, all husbands, all wives, all parents, all children, and all servants, in this community, are told their respective duties : but, under yours, these duties are enjoined on all husbands, all wives, all parents, all children, and a *part of the servants*. May we not reasonably complain of your interpretation, that it violates analogy ?

Imagine the scene, in which a father, in the Apostolic age, assembles his family to listen to a letter from the glowing Peter, or " such

an one as Paul the aged." The letter contains instructions respecting the relative duties of life. The venerable pair, who stand in the conjugal and parental relations, receive, with calm thankfulness, what is addressed to themselves ;—the bright-eyed little ones are eager to know what the Apostle says to children—a poor slave blesses God for his portion of the Apostolic counsel ;—and the scene would be one of unmingled joy, if the writer had but addressed hired servants, as well as slaves. One of the group goes away to weep, because the Apostle had remembered the necessities of all other classes of men, and forgotten those of the hireling. Sir, do you believe that the Apostle was guilty of such an omission? I rejoice that my side of the question between us, does not call for the belief of what is so improbable and unnatural—and, withal, so dishonoring to the memory of the Apostle.

4th. Another reason for believing, that the Apostles intended no such limitation as that which you impose upon their words, is, that their injunctions are as applicable to the other classes of persons occupying these relations, as they are to the particular class to which you confine them. The hired servant, as well as the slave, needs to be admonished of the sins of "eye service" and "purloining ;" and the master of voluntary, as well as involuntary servants, needs to be admonished to "give that which is just and equal." The ruler in a republic, or, in a limited monarchy, as well as the despot, requires to be reminded, that he is to be "a minister of God for good." So the subject of one kind of civil government, as well as that of another, needs to be told to be "subject unto the higher powers."

I need not extend my remarks to prove, that *despotes* and *doulos* are, in the case before us, to be taken in their comprehensive sense of master and servant : and, clearly, therefore, the abolitionist is not guilty of violating your rule, "not to interfere with a civil relation (in another place, you say, 'any of the existing relations of life') for which, and to regulate which, either Christ or his Apostles have prescribed regulations." He believes, as fully as yourself, that the relation of master and servant is approved of God. It is the slavery modification of it—the slaveholder's abuse and perversion of the relation, in reducing the servant to a chattel—which, he believes, is not approved of God.

For the sake of the argument, I will admit, that the slave alone, of all classes of servants, was favored with specific instructions from the Apostles : and then, how should we account for the selection? In no other way, can I conceive, than, on the ground, that his lot is so pe-

cularly hard—so much harder than that of persons under other forms of servitude—that he needs, whilst they do not, Apostolic counsel and advice to keep him just, and patient, and submissive. Let me be spared from the sin of reducing a brother man to such a lot. Your doctrine, therefore, that the Apostles addressed slaves only, and not servants in general, would not, were its correctness admitted, lift you out of all the difficulties in your argument.

Again, does it necessarily follow from this admission, that the relation of slaveholder and slave is sinless? Was the despotism of the Roman government sinless? I do not ask whether the *abuses* of civil government, in that instance, were sinless. But, I ask, was a government, despotic in its constitution, depriving all its subjects of political power, and extending absolute control over their property and persons—was such a government, independently of the consideration of its *abuses*, (if indeed we may speak of the abuses of what is in itself an *abuse*,) sinless? I am aware, that Prof. Hodge says, that it was so: and, when he classes despotism and slavery with *adiaphora*, “things indifferent;” and allows no more moral character to them than to a table or a broomstick, I trust no good man envies his optics. May I not hope that you, Mr. Smylie, perceive a difference between despotism and an “indifferent thing.” May I not hope, that you will, both as a Republican and a Christian, take the ground, that despotism has a moral character, and a bad one? When our fathers prayed, and toiled, and bled, to obtain for themselves and their children the right of self-government, and to effect their liberation from a power, which, in the extent and rigor of its despotism, is no more to be compared to the Roman government, than the “little finger” to the “loins,” I doubt not, that they felt that despotism had a moral, and a very bad moral character. And so would Prof. Hodge have felt, had he stood by their side, instead of being one of their ungrateful sons. I say ungrateful—for, who more so, than he who publishes doctrines that disparage the holy cause in which they were embarked, and exhibits them, as contending for straws, rather than for principles? Tell me, how long will this Republic endure after our people shall have imbibed the doctrine, that the *nature* of civil government is an indifferent thing: and that the poet was right when he said,

“For forms of government let fools contest?”

This, however, is but one of many doctrines of ruinous tendency to the cause of civil liberty, advanced by pro-slavery writers to sustain their system of oppression.

It would surely be superfluous to go into proofs, that the Roman government was vicious and wicked in its constitution and nature. Nevertheless, the Apostle enjoined submission to it, and taught its subjects how to demean themselves under it. Here, then, we have an instance, in which we cannot argue the sinlessness of a relation, from the fact of Apostolic injunctions on those standing in it. Take another instance. The Chaldeans went to a foreign land, and enslaved its people—as members of your guilty partnership have done for some of the slaves you now own, and for the ancestors of others. And God destroyed the Chaldeans expressly “for all their evil that they had done in Zion.” But, wicked as they were, for having instituted this relation between themselves and the Jews, God, nevertheless, tells the Jews to submit to it. He tells them, “Serve the King of Babylon.” He even says, “seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for, in the peace thereof, shall ye have peace.” Here then, we have another instance, in addition to that of the Roman despot and his subjects, in which the Holy Spirit prescribed regulations for wicked relations. You will, at least, allow, that the relation established by the Chaldeans between themselves and the captive Jews, was wicked. But, you will perhaps say, that this is not a relation coming within the contemplation of your rule. Your rule speaks of a civil relation, and also of the existing relations of life. But, the relation in question, being substantially that of slaveholder and slave, is, according to your own showing, a civil relation. Perhaps you will say, it is not an “existing relation of life.” But what do you mean by “an existing relation of life?” Do you mean, that it is a relation approved of God? If you do, and insist that the relation of slaveholder and slave is “an existing relation of life,” then you are guilty of begging the great question between us. Your rule, therefore, can mean nothing more than this—that any relation is rightful, for which the Bible prescribes regulations. But the relation referred to between the Chaldeans and Jews, proves the falsity of the rule. Again, when a man compels me to go with him, is not the compelled relation between him and me a sinful one? And the relation of robber and robbed, which a man institutes between himself and me, is not this also sinful? But, the Bible has prescribed regulations for the relations in both these cases. In the one, it requires me to “go with him twain;” and, in the other, to endure patiently even farther spoliation and, “let him have (my) cloak also.” In these cases, also, do

we see the falsity of your rule—and none the less clearly, because the relations in question are of brief duration.

Before concluding my remarks on this topic, let me say, that your doctrine, that God has prescribed no rules for the behaviour of persons in any other than the just relations of life, reflects no honor on His compassion. Why, even we “cut-throat” abolitionists are not so hard-hearted as to overlook the subjects of a relation, because it is wicked. Pitying, as we do, our poor colored brethren, who are forced into a wicked relation, which, by its very nature and terms, and not by its *abuses*, as you would say, has robbed them of their all—even we would, nevertheless, tell them to “resist not evil”—“to be obedient unto their own masters”—“not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.” We would tell them, as God told the captive Jews, to “seek the peace of those, whither they are carried away captives, and to pray unto the Lord” for them: and our hope of their emancipation is not, as it is most slanderously and wickedly reported to be, in their deluging the South with blood: but, it is, to use again those sweet words of inspiration, that “in the peace thereof they shall have peace.” We do not communicate with the slave; but, if we did, we would teach him, that our hope of his liberation is grounded largely in his patience, and that, if he would have us drop his cause from our hands, he has but to take it into his own, and attempt to accomplish by violence, that which we seek to effect through the power of truth and love on the understanding and heart of his master.

Having disposed of your reasons in favor of the rightfulness of the relation of slaveholder and slave, I will offer a few reasons for believing that it is not rightful.

1st. My strongest reason is, that the great and comprehensive principles, and the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, are opposed to slavery.

2d. In the case of Pharoah and his Jewish slaves, God manifested his abhorrence of the relation of slavery. The fact that the slavery in this case was political, instead of domestic, and, therefore, of a milder type than that of Southern slavery, does not forbid my reasoning from the one form to the other. Indeed, if I may receive your declaration on this point, for the truth, I need not admit that the type of the slavery in question is milder than that of Southern slavery;—for you say, that “their (the Jews) condition was that of the most abject bondage or slavery.” But the supposition that it is milder, being allowed to be correct, would only prove, that God’s abhorrence of Southern bondage as much exceeds that which he expressed of



Egyptian bondage, as the one system is more full than the other of oppression and cruelty.

We learn from the Bible, that it was not because of the *abuses* of the Egyptian system of bondage, but, because of its sinful nature, that God required its abolition. He did not command Pharaoh to cease from the *abuses* of the system, and to correct his administration of it, but to cease from the system itself. "I have heard," says God, "the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage;"—not whom the Egyptians, availing themselves of their absolute power, compel to make brick without straw, and seek to waste and exterminate by the murder of their infant children;—but simply "whom the Egyptians keep in bondage." These hardships and outrages were but the leaves and branches. The root of the abomination was the bondage itself, the assertion of absolute and slaveholding power by "a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." In the next verse God says: "I will rid you"—not only from the burdens and abuses, as you would say, of bondage,—but "out of their (the Egyptians) bondage" itself—out of the relation in which the Egyptians oppressively and wickedly hold you.

God sends many messages to Pharaoh. In no one of them does He reprove him for the abuses of the relation into which he had forced the Jews. In no one of them is he called on to correct the evils which had grown out of that relation. But, in every one, does God go to the root of the evil, and command Pharaoh, "let my people go"—"let my people go, that they may serve me." The abolitionist is reproachfully called an "ultraist" and "an immediatist." It seems that God was both, when dealing with this royal slaveholder:—for He commanded Pharaoh, not to mitigate the bondage of the Israelites, but to deliver them from it—and that, too, immediately. The system of slavery is wicked in God's sight, and, therefore, did He require of Pharaoh its immediate abandonment. The phrase, "let my people go, that they may serve me," shows most strikingly one feature of resemblance between Egyptian and American slavery. Egyptian slavery did not allow its subjects to serve God, neither does American. The Egyptian master stood between his slave and their God: and how strikingly and awfully true is it, that the American master occupies the like position! Not only is the theory of slavery, the world over, in the face of God's declaration; "all souls are mine:" but American slaveholders have brought its practical character to respond so fully to its theory—they have succeeded, so well, in ex-

cluding the light and knowledge of God from the minds of their slaves—that they laugh at His claim to “all souls.”

3d. Paul, in one of his letters to the Corinthian Church, tells servants—say slaves, to suit your views—if they may be free, to prefer freedom to bondage. But if it be the duty of slaves to prefer freedom to bondage, how clearly is it the correlative duty of the master to grant it to him! You interpret the Apostle’s language, in this case, as I do; and it is not a little surprising, that, with your interpretation of it, you can still advocate slavery. You admit, that Paul says—I use your own words—“a state of freedom, on the whole, is the best.” Now, it seems to me, that this admission leaves you without excuse, for defending slavery. You have virtually yielded the ground. And this admission is especially fatal to your strenuous endeavors to class the relation of master and slave with the confessedly proper relations of life, and to show that, like these, it is approved of God. Would Paul say to the child, “a state of freedom” from parental government “on the whole is the best?” Would he say to the wife, “a state of freedom from your conjugal bonds” on the whole is the best? Would he say to the child and wife, in respect to this freedom, “use it rather?” Would he be thus guilty of attempting to annihilate the family relation?

Does any one wonder, that the Apostle did not use stronger language, in advising to a choice and enjoyment of freedom? It is similar to that which a pious, intelligent, and prudent abolitionist would now use under the like circumstances. Paul was endeavoring to make the slave contented with his hard lot, and to show him how unimportant is personal liberty, compared with liberation from spiritual bondage: and this explains why it is, that he spoke so briefly and moderately of the advantages of liberty. His advice to the slave to accept the boon of freedom, was a purely incidental remark: and we cannot infer from it, how great stress he would have laid on the evils of slavery, and on the blessings of liberty, in a discourse treating directly and mainly of those subjects. What I have previously said, however, shows that it would, probably, have been in vain, and worse than in vain, for him to have come out, on any occasion whatever, with an exposition of the evils of slavery.

On the thirty-second page of your book, you say, “Masters cannot, according to the command of Christ, render to their slaves that which is just and equal, if you abolish the relation; for, then they will cease to be masters.” Abolish any of the relations for which regulations are provided “in the New Testament, and, in effect, you

abolish some of the laws of Christ." But, we have just seen that Paul was in favor of abolishing the relation of master and slave; which, as you insist, is a relation for which regulations are provided in the New Testament. It is, therefore, irresistibly deduced from your own premises, that he was in favor of abolishing "the laws of Christ." It would require but little, if any, extension of your doctrine, to make it wrong to remove all the graven images out of a nation. For, in that event, the law of God against bowing down to them would have nothing left to act upon. It would thenceforth be inoperative.

4th. Another reason for believing, that the Apostles did not approve of the slavery modification of servitude, is found in Paul's injunction: "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." I admit, that it is probable that others as well as slaves, are referred to in this injunction: but it certainly is not probable, that others, to the exclusion of slaves, are referred to. But, even on the supposition that slaves are not referred to, but those only who are tenants of prisons, let me ask you which you would rather be—a slave or a prisoner, as Paul probably was when he wrote this injunction?—and whether your own description of the wretched condition of the Roman slave, does not prepare you to agree with me, that if the Apostle could ask sympathy for the prisoner, who, with all his deprivations, has still the protection of law, it is not much more due to the poor slave, who has no protection whatever against lawless tyranny and caprice!

But to proceed, if slaves are the only, or even a part of the persons referred to in the injunction, then you will observe, that the Apostle does not call for the exercise of sympathy towards those who are said to be suffering what you call the *abuses* of slavery; but towards those who are so unhappy as to be but the subjects of it—towards those who are "in bonds." The bare relation of a slave is itself so grievous, as to call for compassion towards those who bear it. Now, if this relation were to be classed with the approved relations of life, why should the Apostle have undertaken to awaken compassion for persons, simply because they were the subjects of it? He never asked for sympathy for persons, simply because they were parties to the relations of husband and wife, parent and child. It may be worthy of notice, that the injunction under consideration is found in Paul's letter to the Jewish Christians. This attempt to awaken pity in behalf of the slave, and to produce abhorrence of slavery, was made upon these, and not upon the Gentile Christians; because, perhaps, that they, who had always possessed the Oracles of God, could

bear it; and they who had just come up out of the mire of heathenism, could not. If this explanation be just, it enforces my argument for ascribing to causes, other than the alleged sinfulness of the institution, the Apostle's omission to utter specific rebukes of slavery.

5th. Another reason for believing that the slavery modification of servitude should not be classed with the confessedly proper relations with which you class it, is the conclusive one, that it interferes with, and tends to subvert, and does actually subvert, these relations. The Apostles prescribe duties, which are necessary to sustain these relations, and make them fruitful sources of happiness to the parties to them. Among these duties are the following: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord"—"Children, obey your parents"—"Husbands, dwell with them" (your wives). But slavery, where it does not make obedience to these commands utterly impossible, conditions it on the permission of usurpers, who have presumed to step between the laws of God and those on whom they are intended to bear. Slavery, not the law of God, practically determines whether husbands shall dwell with their wives: and an amount of anguish, which God alone can compute, testifies that slavery has thus determined, times without number, that husbands shall not dwell with their wives. A distinguished gentleman, who has been much at the South, is spending a little time in my family. He told me but this day, that he had frequently known the air filled with shrieks of anguish for a whole mile around the spot, where, under the hammer of the auctioneer, the members of a family were undergoing an endless separation from each other. It was but last week, that a poor fugitive reached a family, in which God's commands, "Hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth"—"Hide not thyself from thy own flesh"—are not a dead letter. The heaviest burden of his heart is, that he has not seen his wife for five years, and does not expect to see her again: his master, in Virginia, having sold him to a Georgian, and his wife to an inhabitant of the District of Columbia. Whilst the law of God requires wives to "submit themselves to their husbands, as it is fit in the Lord;" the law of slavery commands them, under the most terrific penalties, to submit to every conceivable form of violence, and the most loathsome pollution, "as it is fit" in the eyes of slaveholders—no small proportion of whom are, as a most natural fruit of slavery, abandoned to brutality and lust. The laws of South Carolina and Georgia make it an offence punishable with death, "if any slave shall presume to strike a white person." By the laws of Maryland and Kentucky, it is en-

acted "if any negro, mulatto, or Indian, bond or free, shall, at any time, lift his or her hand in opposition to any person, not being a negro or Indian, he or she shall, in the first-mentioned State, suffer the penalty of cropped ears; and, in the other, thirty-nine lashes on his or her bare back, well laid on, by order of the justice." In Louisiana there is a law—for the enactment of which, slavery is, of course, responsible—in these words: "Free people of color ought never to insult or strike white people, nor presume to conceive themselves equal to the whites: but, on the contrary, they ought to yield to them on every occasion, and never speak or answer them but with respect, under the penalty of imprisonment, according to the nature of the offence." The following extract of a letter, written to me from the South, by a gentleman who still resides there, serves to show how true it is, that "on every occasion," the colored person must yield to the white, and, especially, if the white be clothed with the authority of an ambassador of Christ. "A negro was executed in Autauga Co., not long since, for the murder of his master. The latter, it seems, attempted to violate the wife of his slave in his presence, when the negro enraged, smote the wretch to the ground. And this master—this brute—this fiend—was a preacher of the gospel, in regular standing!" In a former part of this communication, I said enough to show, that slavery prevents children from complying with the command to obey their parents. But, in reply to what I have said of these outrages on the rights of husbands and wives, parents and children, you maintain, that they are no part of the system of slavery. Slaveholders, however, being themselves judges, they are a part of it, or, at least, are necessary to uphold it; else they would not by deliberate, solemn legislation, authorize them. But, be this as it may, it is abundantly proven, that slavery is, essentially and inevitably, at war with the sacred rights of the family state. Let me say, then, in conclusion under this head, that in whatever other company you put slavery, place it not in that of the just relations of husband and wife, parent and child. They can no more company with each other, than can fire with water. Their natures are not only totally opposite to, but destructive of, each other.

6th. The laws, to which you refer on the sixty-eighth page of your book, tend to prove, and, so far as your admission of the necessity of them goes, do prove, that the relation of slaveholder and slave does not deserve a place, in the class of innocent and proper relations. You there say, that the writings of "such great and good men as Wesley, Edwards, Porteus, Paley, Horsley, Scott, Clark,

Wilberforce, Sharp, Clarkson, Fox, Johnson, and a host of as good if not equally great, men of later date," have made it necessary for the safety of the institution of slavery, to pass laws, forbidding millions of our countrymen to read. You should have, also, mentioned the horrid sanctions of these laws—stripes, imprisonment, and death. Now, these laws disable the persons on whom they bear, from fulfilling God's commandments, and, especially, His commandment to "search the Scriptures." They are, therefore, wicked. What then, in its moral character, must be a relation, which, to sustain it, requires the aid of wicked laws?—and, how entirely out of place must it be, when you class it with those just relations of life, that, certainly, require none of the support, which, you admit, is indispensable to the preservation of the relation of slaveholder and slave! It is true, that you attempt to justify the enactment of the laws in question, by the occasions which you say led to it. But, every law forbidding what God requires, is a wicked law—under whatever pretexts, or for whatever purposes, it may have been enacted. Let the occasions which lead to a wicked measure be what they may, the wickedness of the measure is still sufficient to condemn it.

In the case before us, we see how differently different persons are affected by the same fact. Whilst the stand taken against slavery by Wesley, Edwards, and the other choice spirits you enumerate, serves but to inspire you with concern for its safety, it would, of itself, and without knowing their reasons for it, be well nigh enough to destroy my confidence in the institution. Let me ask you, Sir, whether it would not be more reasonable for those, who are so industriously engaged in insulating the system of American slavery, and shrouding it with darkness, to find less fault with the bright and burning light which the writings of the wisest and best men pour upon it, and more with the system which "hateth the light, neither cometh to the light."

You would have your readers believe, that the blessings of education are to be withheld from your slaves—only "until the storm shall be overblown," and that you hope that "Satan's being let loose will be but for a little season." I say nothing more about the last expression, than that I most sincerely desire you may penitently regret having attributed the present holy excitement against slavery to the influences of Satan. By "the storm" you, doubtless, mean the excitement produced by the publications and efforts of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Now, I will not suppose that you meant to deceive your readers on this point. You are, nevertheless, inexcusable for using language so strikingly calculated to lead them into

error. It is not yet three years since that Society was organized : but the statute books of some of the slave States contain laws, forbidding the instruction of slaves in reading, which were enacted long before you and I were born. As long ago as the year 1740, South Carolina passed a law, forbidding to teach slaves to write. Georgia did so in 1770. In the year 1800, thirty-three years before “the storm” of the Anti-Slavery Society began to blow, South Carolina passed a law, forbidding “assemblies of slaves, free negroes, &c., for the purpose of mental instruction.” In the Revised Code of Virginia of 1819, is a law similar to that last mentioned. In the year 1818, the city of Savannah forbade by an ordinance, the instruction of all persons of color, either free or bond, in reading and writing. I need not specify any more of these man-crushing, soul-killing, God-defying laws ;—nor need I refer again to the shocking penalties annexed to the violation of most of them. I conclude my remarks under this head, with the advice, that, in the next edition of your book, you do not assign the anti-slavery excitement, which is now spreading over our land, as the occasion of the passage of the laws in question.

7th. The only other reason I will mention for believing, that the slavery modification of servitude is not approved of God, is, that it has never been known *to work well*—never been known to promote man’s happiness or God’s glory. Wickedness and wretchedness are, so uniformly, the product of slavery, that they must be looked upon, not as its abuses, but as its legitimate fruits. Whilst all admit, that the relations of the family state are, notwithstanding their frequent perversions, full of blessings to the world ; and that, but for them, the world would be nothing better than one scene of pollution and wo ;—to what history of slavery will you refer me, for proof of its beneficent operation ? Will it be to the Bible history of Egyptian slavery ? No—for that informs us of the exceeding wickedness and wretchedness of Egyptian slavery. Will it be to the history of Greek and Roman slavery ? No—for your own book acknowledges its unutterable horrors and abominations. Will you refer me to the history of the West Indies for proofs of the happy fruits of slavery ? Not until the earth is no more, will its polluted and bloody pages cease to testify against slavery. And, when we have come down to American slavery, you will not even open the book which records such facts, as that its subjects are forbidden to be joined in wedlock, and to read the Bible. No—you will not presume to look for a single evidence of the benign influences of a system, where, by the admission of your own ecclesiastical bodies, it has turned millions of

men into heathen. I say nothing now of your beautiful and harmless theories of slavery :—but this I say, that when you look upon slavery as it has existed, or now exists, either amidst the darkness of Mahomedanism or the light of Christianity, you dare not, as you hope for the Divine favor, say that it is a Heaven-descended institution ; and that, notwithstanding it is like Ezekiel's roll, “ written within and without with lamentations and mourning and wo,” it, nevertheless, bears the mark of being a boon from God to man.

Having disposed of your “ strong reasons” for the position, that the New Testament authorizes slavery, I proceed to consider your remaining reasons for it.

Because it does not appear, that our Saviour and the Apostle Peter told certain centurions, who, for the sake of the argument, I will admit were slaveholders, that slaveholding is sinful, you argue, and most confidently too, that it is not sinful. But, it does not appear, that the Saviour and the Apostle charged *any* sinful practices upon them. Then, by your logic, all their other practices, as well as their slaveholding, were innocent, and these Roman soldiers were literally perfect.—Again ; how do you know that the Saviour and the Apostle did not tell them, on the occasion you refer to, that they were sinners for being slaveholders ? The fact, that the Bible does not inform us that they told them so, does not prove that they did not ; much less does it prove, that they did not tell them so subsequently to their first interview with them. And again, the admission that they did not specifically attack slavery, at any of their interviews with the centurions, or on any other occasions whatever, would not justify the inference, that it is sinless. I need not repeat the reasoning which makes the truth of this remark apparent.

You refer to the Saviour's declaration of the unequalled faith of one of these centurions, with the view of making it appear that a person of so great faith could not be a great sinner. But, how long had he exercised this, or, indeed, any Christian faith ? That he was on good terms with the Jews, and had built them a synagogue, is quite as strong evidence, that he had not, as that he had, previously to that time, believed in Jesus :—and, if he had not, then his faith, however strong, and his conversion, however decided, are nothing towards proving that slavery is sinless.

It is evident, that the Apostle was sent to Cornelius for the single purpose of inculcating the doctrine of the remission of sin, through faith in Christ.

I proceed to examine another of your arguments. From Paul's



declaration to the Elders at Miletus, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," taken in connexion with the fact, that the Bible does not inform us that he spoke to them of slaveholding, you confidently and exultingly infer that it is innocent. Here, again, you prove too much, and therefore, prove nothing. It does not appear that he specified a hundredth part of their duties. If he did not tell them to abstain from slaveholding, neither did he tell them to abstain from games and theatres. But, his silence about slaveholding proves to your mind its sinlessness: equally then should his silence about games and theatres satisfy you of their innocence. Two radical errors run through a great part of your book. They are, that the Apostle gave specific instructions concerning all duties, and that the Bible contains these instructions. But, for these errors, your book would be far less objectionable than it is. I might, perhaps, rather say, that but for these, you could not have made up your book.

And now, since Paul's address to the Elders has been employed by you in behalf of slavery, allow me to try its virtue against slavery: and, if it should turn out that you are slain with your own weapon, it will not be the first time that temerity has met with such a fate. I admit, that the Apostle does not tell the Elders of any wrong thing which they had done; but there are some wrong things from which he had himself abstained, and some right things which he had himself done, of which he does tell them. He tells them, for instance, that he had not been guilty of coveting what was another's, and also, that with his own hands he had ministered to his own necessities and those of others: and he further tells them, that they ought to copy his example, and labor, as he had done, "to support the weak." Think you, sir, from this language that Paul was a slaveholder—and, that his example was such, as to keep lazy, luxurious slaveholders in countenance? The slaveholder is guilty of coveting, not only all a man has, but even the man himself. The slaveholder will not only not labor with his hands to supply the wants of others, and "to support the weak;" but he makes others labor to supply his wants:—yes, makes them labor unpaid—night and day—in storm, as well as in sunshine—under the lash—bleeding—groaning—dying—and all this, not to minister to his actual needs, but to his luxuriousness and sensuality.

You ridicule the idea of the abolition of slavery, because it would make the slaveholder "so poor, as to oblige him to take hold of the mau and wedge himself—he must catch, curry, and saddle his own

horse—he must black his own brogans (for he will not be able to buy boots)—his wife must go herself to the wash-tub—take hold of the scrubbing broom, wash the pots, and cook all that she and her rail-mauler will eat.” If Paul were, as you judge he was, opposed to the abolition of slavery, it is at least certain, from what he says of the character of his life in his address to the Elders, that his opposition did not spring from such considerations as array you against it. In his estimation, manual labor was honorable. In a slaveholding community, it is degrading. It is so in your own judgment, or you would not hold up to ridicule those humble employments, which reflect disgrace, only where the moral atmosphere is tainted by slavery. That the pernicious influences of slavery in this respect are felt more or less, in every part of this guilty nation, is but too true. I put it to your candor, sir, whether the obvious fact, that slavery makes the honest labor of the hands disreputable, is not a weighty argument against the supposition that God approves it? I put it to your candor, sir, whether the fact, which you, at least, cannot gainsay, that slavery makes even ministers of the gospel despise the employments of seven-eighths of the human family, and, consequently, the humble classes, who labor in them—I put it to your candor, whether the institution, which breeds such contempt of your fellow-men and fellow Christians, must not be offensive to Him, who commands us to “Honor all men, and love the brotherhood?”

In another argument, you attempt to show, that Paul’s letter to Philemon justifies slaveholding, and also the apprehension and return of fugitive slaves. After having recited the Resolution of the Chilicothe Presbytery—“that to apprehend a slave who is endeavoring to escape from slavery, with a view to restore him to his master, is a direct violation of the Divine law, and, when committed by a member of the church, ought to subject him to censure”—you undertake to make your readers believe, that Paul’s sending Onesimus to Philemon, is a case coming fairly within the purview of the resolution. Let us see if it does. A man by the name of Onesimus was converted to Christianity, under Paul’s ministry at Rome. Paul learnt that he had formerly been a servant—say a slave—of Philemon, who was a “dearly beloved” Christian: and believing that his return to his old master would promote the cause of Christ, and beautifully exemplify its power, he advised him to return to him. He followed the Apostle’s advice and returned. Now, from this example, you attempt to derive a justification for “a member of a Church” to be engaged in forcibly apprehending and restoring fugitive slaves. I

sav forcibly—as the apprehension and return, referred to in the Resolution, are clearly forcible. I cannot refrain, sir, from saying, that you greatly wrong the memory of that blessed Apostle of the Lord Jesus, in construing his writings to authorize such violence upon the persons and rights of men. And greatly, also, do you wrong the Resolution in question, by your endeavor to array the Bible against it. The Resolution is right; it is noble—it denotes in the source whence it emanated, a proper sense of the rights and dignity of man. It is all the better for being marked with an honorable contempt of wicked and heaven-daring laws. May I, having the suspicion, or even the certain knowledge, that my fellow man was once held in slavery, and is still *legally* a slave, seize upon him and reduce him again to slavery? May I thus deal with a guiltless and unaccused brother? Human laws may, it is true, bear me out in this man-stealing, which is not less flagrant than that committed on the coast of Africa:—but, says the Great Law-giver, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day:”—and, it is a part of this “word,” that “he that stealeth a man shall surely be put to death.” In that last day, the mayors, recorders, sheriffs, and others, who have been engaged, whether in their official or individual capacity, in slave-catching and man-stealing, will find human laws but a flimsy protection against the wrath of Him, who judges his creatures by his own and not by human laws. In that “last day,” all who have had a part, and have not repented of it, in the sin of treating man as property; all, I say, whether slaveholders or their official or unofficial assistants, the drivers upon their plantations, or their drivers in the free States—all, who have been guilty of throwing God’s “image” into the same class with the brutes of the field—will find, that He is the avenger of his poorest, meanest ones—and that the crime of transmuting His image into property, is but aggravated by the fact and the plea that it was committed under the sanction of human laws.

But, to return—wherein does the letter of Paul to Philemon justify slaveholding? What evidence does it contain, that Philemon was a slaveholder at the time it was written? He, who had been his slave “in time past,” had, very probably, escaped before Philemon’s conversion to Christ. This “time past,” may have been a *long* “time past.” The word in the original, which is translated “in time past,” does not forbid the supposition. Indeed, it is the same word, which the Apostle uses in the thirteenth verse of the first chapter of Galatians; and there it denotes a *long* “time past”—as much as

from fifteen to eighteen years. Besides, Onesimus' escape and return both favor the supposition, that it was between the two events that Philemon's conversion took place. On the one hand, he fled to escape from the cruelties of an unconverted master; on the other, he was encouraged to follow the Apostle's advice, by the consideration, that on his return to Philemon he should not have to encounter again the unreasonableness and rage of a heathen, but that he should meet with the justice and tenderness of a Christian—qualities, with the existence and value of which, he had now come to an experimental acquaintance. Again, to show that the letter in question does not justify slaveholding—in what character was it, that Paul sent Onesimus to Philemon? Was it in that of a slave? Far from it. It was, in that of “a brother beloved,” as is evident from his injunction to Philemon to “receive him forever—not now as a *slave*, but above a *slave*—a brother beloved.”

It is worthy of remark, that Paul's message to Philemon, shows, not only that he himself was not in favor of slaveholding, but, that he believed the gospel had wrought such an entire change on this subject, in the heart of Philemon, that Onesimus would find on his return to him, the tyrant and the slaveholder sunk in the brother and the Christian.

Paul's course in relation to Onesimus was such, as an abolitionist would deem it proper to adopt, under the like circumstances. If a fugitive slave, who had become a dear child of God, were near me, and, if I knew that his once cruel master had also become a “dearly beloved” Christian; and if, therefore, I had reason to believe, as Paul had, in the case of Philemon, that he would “receive him forever—not now as a *slave*, but above a *slave*, a brother beloved,” I would advise him to revisit his old master, provided he could do so, without interference and violence from others. Such interference and violence did not threaten Onesimus in his return to Philemon. He was not in danger of being taken up, imprisoned, and sold for his jail fees, as a returning Onesimus would be in parts of this nation.

On the 72d page of your book, you utter sentiments, which, I trust, all your readers will agree, are unworthy of a man, a republican, and a Christian. You there endeavor again to make it appear, that it is not the *relation* of master and slave, but only the abuse of it, which is to be objected to.—You say: “Independence is a charming idea, especially to Americans: but what gives it the charm? Is it the thing in itself? or is it because it is a release from the control of a bad master? Had Great Britain been a kind master, our ancestors were

willing to remain her slaves." In reply to this I would say, that it must be a base spirit which does not prize "independence" for its own sake, whatever privation and suffering may attend it; and much more base must be that spirit, which can exchange that "independence" for a state of slavish subjection—even though that state abound in all sensual gratifications. To talk of "a kind master" is to talk of a blessing for a dog, but not for a man, who is made to "call no man master." Were the people of this nation like yourself, they would soon exchange their blood-bought liberties for subjection to any despot who would promise them enough to eat, drink, and wear. But, I trust, that we at the North are "made of sterner stuff." They, who make slaves of others, can more easily become slaves themselves: for, in their aggressions upon others, they have despised and trampled under foot those great, eternal principles of right, which *not only* constitute the bulwark of the general freedom; but his respect for which is indispensable to every man's valuation and protection of his individual liberties. This train of thought associates with itself in my mind, the following passage in an admirable speech delivered by the celebrated William Pinckney, in the Maryland House of Delegates in 1789. Such a speech, made at the present time in a slave State, would probably cost the life of him who should make it; nor could it be delivered in a free State at any less sacrifice, certainly, than that of the reputation of the orator. What a retrograde movement has liberty made in this country in the last fifty years!

"Whilst a majority of your citizens are accustomed to rule with the authority of despots, within particular limits—while your youths are reared in the habit of thinking that the great rights of human nature are not so sacred, but they may with innocence be trampled on, can it be expected, that the public mind should glow with that generous ardor in the cause of freedom, which can alone save a government, like ours, from the lurking demon of usurpation? Do you not dread the contamination of principle? Have you no alarms for the continuance of that spirit, which once conducted us to victory and independence, when the talons of power were unclasped for our destruction? Have you no apprehension left, that when the votaries of freedom sacrifice also at the gloomy altars of slavery, they will, at length, become apostates from them for ever? For my own part, I have no hope, that the stream of general liberty will flow for ever, unpolluted, through the foul mire of partial bondage, or that they, who

have been habituated to lord it over others, will not be base enough, in time, to let others lord it over them. If they resist, it will be the struggle of *pride* and *selfishness*, not of *principle*."

Had Edmund Burke known slaveholders as well as Mr. Pinckney knew them, he would not have pronounced his celebrated eulogium on their love of liberty;—he would not have ascribed to them any love of liberty, but the spurious kind which the other orator, impliedly, ascribes to them—that which "pride and selfishness" beget and foster. Genuine love of liberty, as Mr. Pinckney clearly saw, springs from "principle," and is found no where but in the hearts of those who respect the liberties and the rights of others.

I had reason, in a former part of this communication, to charge some of the sentiments of Professor Hodge with being alike reproachful to the memory of our fathers, and pernicious to the cause of civil liberty. There are sentiments on the 72d page of your book, obnoxious to the like charge. If political "independence"—if a free government—be the poor thing—the illusive image of an American brain—which you sneeringly represent it, we owe little thanks to those who purchased it for us, even though they purchased it with their blood; and little pains need we take in that case to preserve it. When will the people of the Northern States see, that the doctrines now put forth so industriously to maintain slavery, are rapidly undermining liberty?

On the 43d page of your book you also evince your low estimate of man's rights and dues. You there say, "the fact that the planters of Mississippi and Louisiana, even while they have to pay from twenty to twenty-five dollars per barrel for pork the present season, afford to their slaves from three to four and a half pounds per week, does not show, that they are neglectful in rendering to their slaves that which is just and equal." If men had only an animal, and not a spiritual and immortal nature also, it might do for you to represent them as well provided for, if but pork enough were flung to them. How preposterous to tell us, that God approves a system which brings a man, as slavery seems to have brought you, to regard his fellow man as a mere animal!

I am happy to find that you are not all wrong. You are no "gradualist." You are not inconsistent, like those who admit that slavery is sinful, and yet refuse to treat it as sinful. I hope our Northern "gradualists" will profit by the following passage in your book: "If I were convinced by that word (the Bible) that slavery is itself a sin, I trust that, let it cost what it would, I should be an aboli-

tionist, because there is no truth, more clear to my mind, than that the gospel requires an *immediate* abandonment of sin."

You have no doubt of your right to hold your fellow men, as slaves. I wish you had given your readers more fully your views of the origin of this right. I judge from what you say, that you trace it back to the curse pronounced by Noah upon Canaan. But was that curse to know no end? Were Canaan's posterity to endure the entailment of its disabilities and woes, until the end of time? Was Divine mercy never to stay the desolating waves of this curse? Was their harsh and angry roar to reach, even into the gospel dispensation, and to mingle discordantly with the songs of "peace on earth and good will to men?" Was the captivity of Canaan's race to be even stronger than He, who came "to bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives?" But who were Canaan and his descendants? You speak of them, and with singular unfairness, I think, as "*the* posterity of Ham, from whom, it is supposed, sprang the Africans." They were, it is true, a part of Ham's posterity; but to call them "*the* posterity of Ham," is to speak as though he had no other child than Canaan. The fifteenth to nineteenth verses of the tenth chapter of Genesis teach us, beyond all question, that Canaan's descendants inhabited the land of Canaan and adjacent territory, and that this land is identical with the country afterwards occupied by the Jews, and known, in modern times, by the name of Palestine, or the Holy Land. Therefore, however true it may be, that a portion of Ham's posterity settled in Africa, we not only have no evidence that it was the portion cursed, but we have conclusive evidence that it was not.

But, was it a state of slavery to which Canaanites were doomed? I will suppose, for a moment, that it was: and, then, how does it appear right to enslave them? The curse in question is prophecy. Now prophecy does not say what ought to come to pass: nor does it say, that they who have an agency in the production of the foretold event, will be innocent in that agency. If the prediction of an event justifies those who are instrumental in producing it, then was Judas innocent in betraying our Saviour. "It must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." Prophecy simply tells what will come to pass. The question, whether it was proper to enslave Canaanites, depends for its solution not on the curse or prophecy in question. If the measure were in conformity with the general morality of the Bible, then it was proper. Was it in conformity with it? It was not. The justice, equity and mercy

which were, agreeable to the Divine command, to characterize the dealings of the Jews with each other, are in such conformity, and these are all violated by slavery. If those dealings were all based on the general morality of the Bible, as they certainly were, then slavery, which, in its moral character, is completely opposite to them, cannot rest on that morality. If that morality did not permit the Jews to enslave Canaanites, how came they to enslave them? You will say, that they had special authority from God to do so, in the words, "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are around about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." Well, I will admit that God did in one instance, and that He may have done so in others, give special authority to the Jews to do that, which, without such authority, would have been palpably and grossly immoral. He required them to exterminate some of the tribes of the Canaanites. He may have required them to bring other Heathens under a form of servitude violative of the general morality of his word.—Of course, no blame attaches to the execution of such commands. When He specially deposes us to kill for Him, we are as innocent in the agency, notwithstanding the general law, "thou shalt not kill," as is the earthquake or thunderbolt, when commissioned to destroy. Samuel was as innocent in hewing "Agag in pieces," as is the tree that falls upon the traveller. It may be remarked, in this connexion, that the fact that God gave a special statute to destroy some of the tribes of the Canaanites, argues the contrariety of the thing required to the morality of the Bible. It argues, that this morality would not have secured the accomplishment of what was required by the statute. Indeed, it is probable that it was, sometimes, under the influence of the tenderness and mercy inculcated by this morality, that the Jews were guilty of going counter to the special statute in question, and sparing the devoted Canaanites, as in the instance when they "spared Agag." We might reason, similarly to show that a special statute, if indeed there were such a one, authorizing the Jews to compel the Heathen to serve them, argues that compulsory service is contrary to fundamental morality. We will suppose that God did, in the special statute referred to, clothe the Jews with power to enslave Heathens, and now let me ask you, whether it is by this same statute to enslave, that you justify your neighbors and yourself for enslaving your fellow men? But this is a special statute, conferring a power on the Jews only—a power too, not to enslave whomsoever they could; but only a specified portion of the human family, and this portion, as we have



seen, of a stock, other than that from which you have obtained your slaves. If the special statutes, by which God clothed the Jews with peculiar powers, may be construed to clothe you with similar powers, then, inasmuch as they were authorized and required to kill Canaanites, you may hunt up for destruction the straggling descendants of such of the devoted ones, as escaped the sword of the Jews. Or, to make a different interpretation of your rights, under this supposition; since the statute in question authorized and required the Jews to kill the heathen, within the borders of what was properly the Jews' country, then you are also authorized and required to kill the heathens within the limits of your country:—and these are not wanting, if the testimony of your ecclesiastical bodies, before referred to, can be relied on; and, if it be as they say, that the millions of the poor colored brethren in the midst of you are made heathens by the operation of the system, to which, with unparalleled wickedness, they are subjected.

If then, neither Noah's curse, nor the special statute in question, authorize you to enslave your fellow men, there is, probably, but one ground on which you will contend for authority to do so—and this is the ground of the general morality of the Christian religion—of the general principles of right and duty, in the word of God. Do you find your authority on this ground? If you do, then, manifestly, you have a right to enslave me, and I a right to enslave you, and every man has a right to enslave whomsoever he can;—a right as perfect, as is the right to do good to one another. Indeed, the enslavement of each other would, under this construction of duty, *be* the doing of good to one another. Think you, sir, that the universal exercise of this right would promote the fulfilment of the “new commandment that ye love one another?” Think you, it would be the harbinger of millennial peace and blessedness? Or, think you not, rather, that it would fully and frightfully realize the prophet's declaration: “They all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his neighbor with a net.”

If any people have a right to enslave their fellow men, it must be the Jews, if they once had it. But if they ever had it, it ceased, when all their peculiar rights ceased. In respect to rights from the Most High, they are now on the same footing with other races of men. When “the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” then that distinction from the Gentile, in which the Jew had gloried, ceased, and the partition wall between them was prostrate for ever. The Jew, as well as the Gentile, was never more to depart from the general morality of the Bible. He was never

again to be under any special statutes, whose requirements should bring him into collision with that morality: He was no more to confine his sympathies and friendships within the narrow range of the twelve tribes: but every son and daughter of Adam were thenceforth entitled to claim from him the heart and hand of a brother. "Under the glorious dispensation of the gospel," says the immortal Granville Sharp, "we are absolutely bound to consider ourselves as citizens of the world; every man whatever, without any partial distinction of nation, distance, or complexion, must necessarily be esteemed our neighbor and our brother; and we are absolutely bound, in Christian duty, to entertain a disposition towards all mankind, as charitable and benevolent, at least, as that which was required of the Jews under the law towards their brethren; and, consequently, it is absolutely unlawful for those who call themselves Christians, to exact of their brethren (I mean their brethren of the universe) a more burthensome service, than that to which the Jews were limited with respect to their brethren of the house of Israel; and the slavery or involuntary bondage of a brother Israelite was absolutely forbid."

It occurs to me, that after all which has been said to satisfy you, that compulsory servitude, if such there were among the Jews, cannot properly be pleaded in justification of yours; a question may still be floating in your mind whether, if God directed his chosen people to enslave the Heathen, slavery should not be regarded as a good system of servitude? Just as pertinently may you ask, whether that is not a good system of servitude, which is found in some of our state prisons. Punishment probably—certainly not labor—is the leading object in the one case as well as the other: and the labor of the bondman in the one, as well as of the convict in the other, constitutes but a subordinate consideration. To suppose that God would, with every consideration out of view, but that of having the best relation of employer and laborer, make choice of slavery—to suppose that He believes that this state of servitude operates most beneficially, both for the master and the servant—is a high impeachment of the Divine wisdom and goodness. But thus guilty are you, if you are unwilling to believe, that, if He chose the severe servitude in question, He chose it for the punishment of his enemies, or from some consideration, other than its suitability for the ordinary purposes of the relation of master and servant.

But it has been for the sake of argument only, that I have admitted that God authorized the Jews to enslave the heathen. I now totally deny that He did so. You will, of course, consent that if He did

so, it was in a special statute, as was the case when He authorized them to exterminate other heathen: and you will as readily consent that He enacted the statutes, in both instances, with the view of punishing his enemies. Now, in killing the Canaanites, the Jew was constituted, not the owner of his devoted fellow man, but simply the executioner of God's vengeance: and evidently, such and no other was his character when he was reducing the Canaanite to involuntary servitude—that he did so reduce him, and was commissioned by God to do so, is the supposition we make for the sake of argument. Had the Jews been authorized by God to shut up in dungeons for life those of the heathen, whom they were directed to have for bondmen and bondmaids, you would not claim, that they, any more than sheriffs and jailers in our day, are to be considered in the light of owners of the persons in their charge. Much less then, can the Jews be considered as the owners of any person whom they held in servitude: for, however severe the type of that servitude, the liberty of its subject was not restricted, as was that of the prisoners in question:—most certainly, the power asserted over him is not to be compared in extent with that asserted by the Jew over the Canaanite, whom he slew;—a case in which he was, indisputably, but the executioner of the Divine wrath. The Canaanite, whether devoted to a violent death or to an involuntary servitude, still remained the property of God: and God no more gave him up to be the property of the executioner of his wrath, than the people of the State of New York give up the offender against public justice to be the property of the ministers of that justice. God never suspends the accountability of his rational creatures to himself: and his rights to them, He never transfers to others. He could not do so consistently with his attributes, and his indissoluble relations to man. But slavery claims, that its subjects are the property of man. It claims to turn them into mere chattels, and to make them as void of responsibility to God, as other chattels. Slavery, in a word, claims to push from his throne the Supreme Being, who declares, "all souls are mine." That it does not succeed in getting its victim out of God's hand, and in unmanning and *chattelizing* him—that God's hold upon him remains unbroken, and that those upward tendencies of the soul, which distinguish man from the brute, are not yet entirely crushed in him—is no evidence in favor of its nature:—it simply proves, that its power is not equal to its purposes. We see, then, that the Jews—if it be true that they reduced their fellow men to involuntary servitude, and did so as the Heaven-appointed ministers of God's justice,—are not to be charged with

slaveholding for it. There may be involuntary servitude where there is no slavery. The essential and distinguishing feature of slavery is its reduction of man to property—to a thing. A tenant of one of our state prisons is under a sentence of “hard labor for life.” But he is not a slave. That is, he is not the *thing* which slavery would mark its subject. He is still a man. Offended justice has placed him in his present circumstances, because he is a man: and, it is because he is a *man* and not a *thing*—a responsible, and not an irresponsible being, that he must continue in his present trials and sufferings.

God’s commandments to the Jews, respecting servants and strangers, show that He not only did not authorize them to set up the claim of property in their fellow men, but that He most carefully guarded against such exercises of power, as might lead to the assumption of a claim so wrongful to Himself. Some of these commandments I will bring to your notice. They show that whatever was the form of servitude under which God allowed the Jews to hold the heathen, it was not slavery. Indeed, if all of the Word of God which bears on this point were cited and duly explained, it would, perhaps, appear that He allowed no involuntary servitude whatever amongst the Jews. I give no opinion whether he allowed it or not. There are strong arguments which go to show, that He did not allow it; and with these arguments the public will soon be made more extensively acquainted. It is understood, that the next number of the Anti-Slavery Examiner will be filled with them.

1st. So galling are the bonds of Southern slavery, that it could not live a year under the operation of a law forbidding the restoration of fugitive servants to their masters. How few of the discontented subjects of this oppressive servitude would agree with Hamlet, that it is better to

—“bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of.”

What a running there would be from the slave States to the free!—from one slave State to another!—from one plantation to another! Now, such a law—a solemn commandment of God—many writers on slavery are of the opinion, perhaps too confident opinion, was in force in the Jewish nation (Deut. xxiii, 15); and yet the system of servitude on which it bore, and which you cite as the pattern and authority for your own, lived in spite of it. How could it? Manifestly, because its genius was wholly unlike that of Southern slavery;

and because its rigors and wrongs, if rigors and wrongs there were in it, bear no comparison to those which characterize Southern slavery; and which would impel nine-tenths of its adult subjects to fly from their homes, did they but know that they would not be obliged to return to them. When Southern slaveholders shall cease to scour the land for fugitive servants, and to hunt them with guns and dogs, and to imprison, and scourge, and kill them;—when, in a word, they shall subject to the bearing of such a law as that referred to their system of servitude, then we shall begin to think that they are sincere in likening it to the systems which existed among the Jews. The law, enacted in Virginia in 1705, authorizing any two justices of the peace “by proclamation to outlaw runaways, who might thereafter be killed and destroyed by any person whatsoever, by such ways and means as he might think fit, without accusation or impeachment of any crime for so doing,” besides that it justifies what I have just said about hunting fugitive servants, shows, 1st. That the American Anti-Slavery Society is of too recent an origin to be the occasion, as slaveholders and their apologists would have us believe, of all the cruel laws enacted at the South. 2d. That Southern slaveholders would be very unwilling to have their system come under the operation of such a law as that which allowed the Jewish servant to change his master. 3d. That they are monsters, indeed, into which men may be turned by their possession of absolute power.

You, perhaps, suppose, (and I frankly admit to you, that there is some room for the supposition,) that the servants referred to in the 15th and 16th verses of the 23d chapter of Deuteronomy, were such as had escaped from foreign countries to the country of the Jews. But, would this view of the matter help you? By taking it, would you not expose yourself to be most pertinently and embarrassingly asked, for what purpose these servants fled to a strange and most odious people?—and would not your candid reply necessarily be, that it was to escape from the galling chains of slavery, to a far-famed milder type of servitude?—from Gentile oppression, to a land in which human rights were protected by Divine laws? But, as I have previously intimated, I have not the strongest confidence in the anti-slavery argument, so frequently drawn from this passage of the Bible. I am not sure that a Jewish servant is referred to: nor that on the supposition of his being a foreigner, the servant came under any form of servitude when entering the land of the Jews. Before leaving the topic, however, let me remark, that the passage, under any construction of it, makes against Southern slavery. Admit that the

fugitive servant was a foreigner, and that he was not reduced to servitude on coming among the Jews, let me ask you whether the law in question, under this view of it, would be tolerated by the spirit of Southern slavery?—and whether, before obedience would be rendered to it, you would not need to have a different type of servitude, in the place of slavery? You would—I know you would—for you have been put to the trial. When, by a happy providence, a vessel was driven, the last year, to a West India island, and the chains of the poor slaves with which it was filled fell from around them, under freedom's magic power, the exasperated South was ready to go to war with Great Britain. *Then*, the law against delivering up foreign servants to their masters was not relished by you. The given case comes most strikingly within the supposed policy of this law. The Gentile was to be permitted to remain in the land to which he had fled, and where he would have advantages for becoming acquainted with the God of the Bible. Such advantages are they enjoying who escaped from the confessed heathenism of Southern slavery to the island in question. They are now taught to read that “Book of life,” which before, they were forbidden to read. But again, suppose a slave were to escape from a West India island into the Southern States—would you, with your “domestic institutions,” of which you are so jealous, render obedience to this Divine law? No; you would subject him *for ever* to a servitude more severe than that, from which he had escaped. Indeed, if a *freeman* come within a certain portion of our Southern country, and be so unhappy as to bear a physical resemblance to the slave, he will be punished for that resemblance, by imprisonment, and even by a reduction to slavery.

2d. Southern slaveholders, who, by their laws, own men as absolutely as they own cattle, would have it believed, that Jewish masters thus owned their fellow-men. If they did, why was there so wide a difference between the commandment respecting the stray man, and that respecting the stray ox or ass? The man was not, but the beasts were, to be returned; and that too, even though their owner was the enemy of him who met them. (Ex. 23. 4.) I repeat the question;—why this difference? The only answer is, because God made the brute to be the *property* of man; but He never gave us our noble nature for such degradation. Man's title deed, in the eighth Psalm, extends his right of property to the inanimate and brute creation only—not to the flesh and bones and spirit of his fellow-man.

3d. The very different penalties annexed to the crime of stealing a man, and to that of stealing a thing, shows the eternal and infinite

difference which God has established between a man and property. The stealing of a man was *surely* to be punished with death; whilst mere property was allowed to atone for the offence of stealing property.

4th. Who, if not the slave, can be said to be vexed and oppressed! But God's command to his people was, that they should neither "vex a stranger, nor oppress him."

5th. Such is the nature of American slavery, that not even its warmest friends would claim that it could recover itself after such a "year of jubilee" as God appointed. One such general delivery of its victims would be for ever fatal to it. I am aware that you deny that all the servants of the Jews shared in the blessings of the "year of jubilee." But let me ask you, whether if one third or one half of your servants were discharged from servitude every fiftieth year—and still more, whether if a considerable portion of them were thus discharged every sixth year—the remainder would not be fearfully discontented? Southern masters believe, that their only safety consists in keeping down the discontent of their servants. Hence their anxious care to withhold from them the knowledge of human rights. Hence the abolitionist who is caught in a slave state, must be whipped or put to death. If there were a class of servants amongst the Jews, who could bear to see all their fellow servants go free, whilst they themselves were retained in bondage, then that bondage was of a kind very different from what you suppose it to have been. Had its subjects worn the galling chains of American slavery, they would have struggled with bloody desperation for the deliverance which they saw accorded to others.

I scarcely need say, that the Hebrew words rendered "bondmen" and "bondmaids," do not, in themselves considered, and independently of the connexion in which they are used, any more than the Greek words *doulos* and *doule*, denote a particular kind of servant. If the servant was a slave, because he was called by the Hebrew word rendered "bondman," then was Jacob a slave also:—and even still greater absurdities could be deduced from the position.

I promised, in a former part of this communication, to give you my reasons for denying that you are at liberty to plead in behalf of slavery, the example of any compulsory servitude in which Jews may have held foreigners. My promise is now fulfilled, and I trust that the reasons are such as not to admit of an answer.

Driven, as you now are, from every other conceivable defence of slaveholding it may be (though I must hope better things of you),

that you will fly to the ground taken by the wicked multitude—that there is authority in the laws of man for being a slaveholder. But, not only is the sin of your holding slaves undiminished by the consideration, that they are held under human laws; but, your claiming to hold them under such laws, makes you guilty of an additional sin, which, if measured by its pernicious consequences to others, is by no means inconsiderable. The truth of these two positions is apparent from the following considerations.

1st. There is no valid excuse to be found, either in man's laws or any where else, for transgressing God's laws. Whatever may be thought, or said to the contrary, it still remains, and for ever will remain true, that under all circumstances, "sin is the transgression of the (Divine) law."

2d. In every instance in which a commandment of God is transgressed, under the cover and plea of a human law, purporting to permit what that commandment forbids, there is, in proportion to the authority and influence of the transgressor, a fresh sanction imparted to that law; and consequently, in the same proportion the public habit of setting up a false standard of right and wrong is promoted. It is this habit—this habit of graduating our morality by the laws of the land in which we live—that makes the "mischief framed by a law" so much more pernicious than that which has no law to countenance it, and to commend it to the conscience. Who is unaware, that nothing tends so powerfully to keep the traffic in strong drink from becoming universally odious, as the fact, that this body and soul destroying business finds a sanction in human laws? Who has not seen the man, authorized by these laws to distribute the poison amongst his tipsing neighbors, proof against all the shafts of truth, under the self-pleasing and self-satisfying consideration, that his is a lawful business.

This habit of setting up man's law, instead of God's law, as the standard of conduct, is strikingly manifested in the fact, that on the ground, that the Federal Constitution binds the citizens of the United States to perpetuate slavery, or at least, not to meddle with it, we are, both at the North and the South, called on to forbear from all efforts to abolish it. The exertions made to discover in that instrument, authority for slavery, and authority against endeavors to abolish it, are as great, anxious, and unwearied, as if they who made them, thought that the fortunate discovery would settle for ever the great question which agitates our country—would nullify all the laws of God against slavery—and make the oppression of our colored breth-



ren, as long as time shall last, justifiable and praiseworthy. But this discovery will never be made; for the Constitution is not on the side of the slaveholder. If it were, however, it would clothe him with no moral right to act in opposition to the paramount law of God. It is not at all necessary to the support of my views, in this communication, to show that the Constitution was not designed to favor slavery; and yet, a few words to this end may not be out of place.

A treaty between Great Britain and Turkey, by the terms of which the latter should be prohibited from allowing slaves to be brought within her dominions, after twenty years from its date, would, all will admit, redound greatly to the credit of Great Britain. To be sure, she would not have done as much for the cause of humanity, as if she had succeeded in bringing the further indulgence of the sin within the limits of a briefer period, and incomparably less than if she had succeeded in reconciling the Sublime Porte to her glorious and emphatically English doctrines of immediate emancipation. But still she would deserve some praise—much more than if she had done nothing in this respect. Now, for my present purpose, and many of our statesmen say, for nearly all purposes, the Federal Constitution is to be regarded as a treaty between sovereign States. But how much more does this treaty do for the abolition of slavery, than that on which we were, a moment since, bestowing our praise! It imposes a prohibition similar to that in the supposed treaty between Great Britain and Turkey, so that no slaves have been allowed to be introduced into the United States since the year 1808. It goes further, and makes ample provision for the abolition and prevention of slavery in every part of the nation, save these States; so that the District of Columbia and the national territories can be cleared for ever of slavery, whenever a majority of the parties, bound by the treaty, shall desire it. And it goes still farther, and clothes this majority with the power of regulating commerce between the States, and consequently, of prohibiting their mutual traffic in “the bodies and souls of men.” Had this treaty gone but one step farther, and made an exception, as it should have done, in behalf of slaves, in the clause making necessary provision for the return of fugitives held to service in the States from which they flee, none but those who think it is fairly held responsible for the twenty years indulgence of the unholy traffic, would have claimed any thing more from it in relation to slavery. Now, this instrument, which contains nothing more, bearing on the subject of slavery, than what I have referred to, and whose pages are not once

polluted with the words "slave" and "slavery," is abundantly and triumphantly cited, as conclusive authority in favor of slavery, and against endeavors to abolish it. Whilst we regret, that the true-hearted sons of freedom in the Convention which formed it, could obtain no more concessions from the advocates of slavery, let us honor their sacred memory, and thank God for those they did obtain.

I have supposed it possible, that you might number yourself with those, who defend slavery on the ground of its alleged conformity with human laws. It occurs to me, that you may, also, take hope, that slavery is defensible in the supposed fact, that a considerable share of the professing Christians, in the free States, are in favor of it. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." If all professing Christians were for slavery, yet, if God is against it, that is reason enough why you also should be against it. It is not true, however, that a considerable share of our professing Christians are on the side of slavery. Indeed, until I read Professor Hodge's article, I had not supposed that any of them denied its sinfulness. It is true, that a large proportion of them refuse to take a stand against it. Let them justify to their consciences, and to their God, as they can, the equivocal silence and still more equivocal action on this subject, by which they have left their Southern brethren to infer, that Northern piety sanctions slavery. It is the doctrine of expediency, so prevalent and corrupting in the American Church, which has deceived you into the belief, that a large share of the professing Christians in the free States, think slavery to be sinless. This share, which you have in your eye, is, as well as the remainder, convinced that slavery is sinful—*only they think it inexpedient to say so*. In relation to other sins, they are satisfied with God's way of immediate abandonment. But, in relation to slavery, they flatter themselves that they have discovered "a more excellent way"—that of leaving the sin untouched, and simply hoping for its cessation, at some indefinite period in the distant future. I say hoping, instead of praying, as prayer for an object is found to be accompanied by corresponding efforts. But for this vile doctrine of expediency, which gives to our ecclesiastical bodies, whenever the subject of such a giant and popular sin as slavery is broached in them, the complexion of a political caucus steeped in unprincipled policy, rather than that of a company of the Saviour's disciples, inquiring "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom," the way of the Lord;—but for this doctrine, I say, you would, long ago, have heard the testimony of Northern Christians against Southern slavery;—and not only so, but you would

long ago have seen this Dagon fall before the power of that testimony. I trust, however, that this testimony will not long be withheld; and that Northern Christians will soon perceive, that, in relation to slavery, as well as every other sin, it is the safest and wisest, as well as the holiest course, to drop all carnal policy—to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.”

Not only are Northern Christians, with very rare exceptions, convinced of the sin of slavery; but even your slaveholders were formerly accustomed, with nearly as great unanimity, to admit, that they themselves thought it to be sinful. It is only recently, and since they have found that their system must be tested by the Bible, thoroughly and in earnest—not merely for the purpose, as formerly, of determining without any practical consequences of the determination, what is the moral character of slavery—but, for the purpose of settling the point, whether the institution shall stand or fall,—it is only, I say, since the civilized world has been fast coming to claim that it shall be decided by the Bible, and by no lower standard, whether slavery shall or shall not exist—that your slaveholders have found it expedient to take the ground, that slavery is not sin.

It probably has not occurred to you, how fairly and fully you might have been stopped, upon the very threshold of your defence of slavery. The only witness you have called to the stand to sustain your sinking cause, is the Bible. But this is a witness, which slavery has itself impeached, and of which, therefore, it is not entitled to avail itself. It is a good rule in our civil courts, that a party is not permitted to impeach his own witness; and it is but an inconsiderable variation of the letter of this rule, and obviously no violation of its spirit and policy to say, that no party is permitted to attempt to benefit his cause by a witness whom he has himself impeached. Now, the slaveholder palpably violates this rule, when he presumes to offer the Bible as a witness for his cause:—for he has previously impeached it, by declaring, in his slave system, that it is not to be believed—that its requirements are not to be obeyed—that they are not even to be read (though the Bible expressly directs that they shall be)—that concubinage shall be substituted for the marriage it enjoins—and that its other provisions for the happiness, and even the existence, of the social relations, shall be trampled under foot. The scene, in which a lawyer should ask the jury to believe what his witness is saying at one moment, and to reject what he is saying at another, would be ludicrous enough. But what more absurdity is there in it than that which the pro-slavery party are guilty of, when they would

have us deal, whilst their witness is testifying in favor of marriage and searching the Scriptures; and, all ears, whilst that same witness is testifying, as they construe it, in favor of slavery! No—before it will be competent for the American slaveholder to appeal to the Bible for justification of his system, that system must be so modified, as no longer to make open, shameless war upon the Bible. I would recommend to slaveholders, that, rather than make so unhallowed a use of the Bible as to attempt to bolster up their hard beset cause with it, they should take the ground, which a very distinguished slaveholding gentleman of the city of Washington took, in a conversation with myself on the subject of slavery. Feeling himself uncomfortably plied by quotations from the word of God, he said with much emphasis, “Stop, Sir, with that, if you please—SLAVERY IS A SUBJECT, WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BIBLE.”

This practice of attempting to put the boldest and most flagrant sins under the wing and sanction of the Bible, is chargeable on others as well as on the advocates of slavery. Not to speak of other instances of it—it is sought to justify by this blessed book the most despotic forms of civil government, and the drinking of intoxicating liquors. There are two evils so great, which arise from this perversion of the word of God, that I cannot forbear to notice them. One is, that the consciences of men are quieted, when they imagine that they have found a justification in the Bible for the sins of which they are guilty. The other is, that infidels are multiplied by this perversion. A respectable gentleman, who edits a newspaper in this neighborhood, and who, unhappily, is not established in the Christian faith, was asked, a few months since, to attend a meeting of a Bible Society. “I am not willing,” said he, in reply, “to favor the circulation of a volume, which many of its friends claim to be on the side of slavery.” Rely on it, Sir, that wherever your book produces the conviction that the Bible justifies slavery, it there weakens whatever of respect for that blessed volume previously existed. Whoever is brought to associate slavery with the Bible, may, it is true, think better of slavery; but he will surely think worse of the Bible. I hope, therefore, in mercy to yourself and the world, that the success of your undertaking will be small.

But oftentimes the same providence has a bright, as well as a gloomy, aspect. It is so in the case before us. The common attempt, in our day, to intrench great sins in the authority of the Bible, is a consoling and cheering evidence, that this volume is recognised as the public standard of right and wrong; and that, whatever may

be their private opinions of it who are guilty of these sins, they cannot hope to justify themselves before the world, unless their lives are, apparently, at least, conformed, in some good degree, to this standard. We may add, too, that, as surely as the Bible is against slavery, every pro-slavery writer, who like yourself appeals to it as the infallible and only admissible standard of right and wrong, will contribute to the overthrow of the iniquitous system. His writings may not, uniformly, tend to this happy result. In some instances, he may strengthen confidence in the system of slavery by producing conviction, that the Bible sanctions it;—and then his success will be, as before remarked, at the expense of the claims and authority of the Bible:—but these instances of the pernicious effects of his writings will be very rare, quite too rare we may hope, to counterbalance the more generally useful tendency of writings on the subject of slavery, which recognise the paramount authority of God's law.

Having completed the examination of your book, I wish to hold up to you, in a single view, the substance of what you have done. You have come forth, the unblushing advocate of American slavery;—a system which, whether we study its nature in the deliberate and horrid enactments of its code, or in the heathenism and pollution and sweat and tears and blood, which prove, but too well, the agreement of its practical character with its theory—is, beyond all doubt, more oppressive and wicked than any other, which the avaricious, sensual, cruel heart of man ever devised. You have come forth, the unblushing advocate of a system under which parents are daily selling their children; brothers and sisters, their brothers and sisters; members of the Church of Christ, their fellow-members—under which, in a word, immortal man, made “in the image of God,” is more unfeelingly and cruelly dealt with, than the brute. I know that you intimate that this system would work well, were it in the hands of none but good men. But with equal propriety might you say, that the gaming-house or the brothel would work well in such hands. You have attempted to sustain this system by the testimony of the Bible. The system, a part only of the crimes of which, most of the nations of Christendom have declared to be piracy;—against which, the common sense, the philosophy, the humanity, the conscience of the world, are arrayed;—this system, so execrable and infamous, you have had the presumption to attempt to vindicate by that blessed book, whose Author “is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and (who) cannot look upon iniquity”—and who “has magnified his word above all his name.”

And now, Sir, let me solemnly inquire of you, whether it is right to do what you have done?—whether it is befitting a man, a Christian, and a minister of the gospel?—and let me, further, ask you, whether you have any cheering testimony in your heart that it is God's work you have been doing? That you and I may, in every future work of our hands, have the happiness to know, that the approbation of our employer comes from the upper, and not from the under world, is the sincere desire of

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.









